

Frank J. Klingberg
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JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN

SECRETARY OF STATE

MARCH 6, 1844, TO MARCH 6, 1845

BY

ST. GEORGE LEAKIN SIOUSSAT, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY

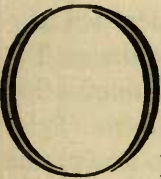
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

*For Professor Klingberg
with the regards of*

Mr. St. George Leakin Sioussat

CHAPTER I

APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE
AND EARLY CAREER

N the morning of the 29th of February, 1844, in the breakfast-room of the White House, President Tyler was standing by the fireplace, reading in a morning newspaper the account of the tragic accident which had taken place the day before upon the *Princeton*. Into the room there came, at this time, one of the President's intimate associates, a fellow Virginian, Henry A. Wise, who had represented the congressional district in which both the President and the late Secretary Upshur lived. Only three weeks before, Wise had been nominated to be minister to Brazil, and to this the Senate had consented:¹ but he was still in Washington awaiting the arrangements for his voyage. On this February morning, before he came to the President, he had urged Senator McDuffie of South Carolina to write at once to John C. Calhoun, McDuffie's former colleague, and to beg Calhoun not to decline the offer of the appointment as Secretary of State, to which in all probability he would at once be nominated. Now, after the President had for a moment given way to the grief that was upon him, Wise pressed him, in view of the

importance of the impending question of Texas, to send at once for Calhoun. To this Tyler gave a quick and firm refusal, saying that Calhoun was not the man of his choice. Wise argued at length, but in vain, until after breakfast, preparing to take his departure, he rather theatrically informed Tyler that their parting would probably be a final one, for, if Tyler refused to nominate Calhoun, he, Wise, had done them both a great wrong. He explained that, without asking Tyler's consent, he had permitted Senator McDuffie to believe that he had the President's authority to make the request for McDuffie's assistance. Astonished at Wise's boldness, Tyler nevertheless yielded.² On March 6 the nomination was made, and confirmed. On that day, also, Tyler wrote to Calhoun, cordially inviting him to accept the Secretaryship, and stressing the importance of the negotiations with regard to Texas and Oregon.

Thus came to pass an appointment which offers interesting opportunity for speculation in political ethics. Wise tricked his friend the President for the good of the latter and the country; Tyler warmly invited a man whom he did not want. Calhoun, ignorant of what Wise had done, accepted the nomination, though unwillingly,³ and found in Tyler's hearty letter, in the unanimous confirmation of the Senate, in the commendations of the press, and in the many letters which he received from friends who urged him not to decline the appointment,⁴ grounds for believing that he was called, by a demand too strong to resist, to meet a national crisis.

When first the probability, and then the fact, of Calhoun's appointment was noised abroad, the newspapers contained many editorials which voiced approval of the

selection.⁵ To a friend of President Tyler, James K. Polk, who himself declined to be considered for a Cabinet office, wrote favourably of Calhoun's appointment.⁶ Even the Whig, Edward Everett, wrote from London, not only to Tyler but to one of his family, saying to the latter that Calhoun's appointment was "an event in itself and in a very different way not less unexpected and strange than the catastrophe of the *Princeton*: but in reference to our foreign affairs I think it an excellent appointment, decidedly the best which the President could have made. It is in the power of Mr. Calhoun, in the present posture of affairs, to do more good in the Department of State than Mr. Webster could have done."⁷ Calhoun, himself, received enthusiastic letters from his friends, and remarked upon one from a "Whig New England Senator."⁸ He was at this time nearly sixty-two years of age.⁹ To summarize his early career must be our first task.

Calhoun came of pioneer stock. He was born on March 18, 1782, at the Long Cane settlement in the district of '96 in South Carolina, the fourth child and the third son of Patrick Calhoun and Martha Caldwell Calhoun, both of Irish descent. Though the circumstances of the family were straitened by the death of Calhoun's father when the boy was not quite fourteen, Calhoun received enough schooling to enter, in 1802, the junior class at Yale College. He graduated with distinction September 12, 1804. After a winter passed in the study of law in Abbeville, South Carolina, he returned to New England to enter the Law School conducted at Litchfield, Connecticut, by Judge Tapping Reeve, of the Supreme Court of that state, and by James Gould. Here he studied

until 1806. He then returned to South Carolina and took up the study of law in Charleston, but soon removed to Abbeville. His marriage, in 1811, to a cousin, Floride Bonneau Calhoun, or Colhoun, as her branch of the family spelled the name, undoubtedly aided him no little to abandon the practice of the law, which he disliked, to establish himself as a planter, and to undertake a political career.

After he had served two years in the lower house of the state legislature, in the year 1810 his national career began with an election to the House of Representatives to represent the South Carolina district composed of Abbeville, Laurens and Newberry districts. He continued in the House of Representatives through the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Congresses to 1817. Throughout this period his opinions were those of a strong nationalist. He vigorously gave his aid to the War of 1812 and supported many measures the attainment of which depended upon a broad interpretation of the Constitution—the tariff of 1816, the establishment of the second bank of the United States, and various proposals for internal improvements. It was in this broad view of affairs that, after several others had declined the offer of the position, Calhoun accepted Monroe's appointment to be Secretary of War. In this office he manifested a high order of ability, established many reforms in the department under his care, proved himself to be especially concerned with the West and with Indian affairs, and promoted the building of national roads. When Monroe's term was expiring in 1824, Calhoun like his fellow Cabinet members, John Quincy Adams and William H. Craw-

ford, had become an active competitor for election to the Presidency, and at this time a political biography of him made its appearance.¹⁰ He withdrew from the contest to accept what proved to be a safe election to the Vice-Presidency.

In 1828, the popularity of Andrew Jackson and the need of rallying all opposition to prevent the re-election of Adams led to Calhoun's acceptance of the second place once more, this time with a joining of forces between Jackson and himself. It was not in the calculations of the politicians of that day that Jackson would not only live out his first term, but also fulfil a second and then force a successor upon his party. But the opposition of opinion that had developed between Clay and Adams on the one hand, and Calhoun on the other, was outdistanced by that which arose between Calhoun and Jackson upon the basis of personal, state and national issues. Calhoun's situation in the "Eaton malaria," the carefully revealed account of the fact that in the days of Monroe Calhoun had supported the censure of Jackson's actions in Florida, the course of affairs in South Carolina and Jackson's failure to take a strong anti-tariff position, resulted, in the summer of 1832, in Calhoun's resignation of the Vice-Presidency and in his election by South Carolina to the Senate of the United States. He took his seat January 4, 1833.

The matters which brought about his resignation of the Vice-Presidency were in the field of domestic politics. These years brought to pass a complete change in Calhoun's political opinions and led him to think out a theory of the Constitution of the United States, to which he ever afterwards held, as he believed, consistently,

though at times his views were a source of wonderment to friendly and to hostile critics. This change in belief followed or accompanied that which came over the people of his state, when South Carolina appeared not to prosper and sought to explain its falling back in terms of the ill results of a high tariff. With the great struggle over Nullification we have not, in this work, to do; but the remembrance of it is essential to an understanding of Calhoun's senatorial career. Calhoun was forced to combine with Clay in making the compromise of 1833 by which Nullification was withdrawn and a gradually reduced tariff substituted for the obnoxious Act of 1832, and throughout the long and violent struggles of Jackson's second Administration and of Van Buren's, he was found generally in opposition to the Jacksonian policies. As time went on and new issues arose, Calhoun found himself more and more in political agreement with the Democrats and opposed to the Whigs, until finally he definitely re-established relations with the Democratic party.¹¹

It lies outside of our task to attempt any detailed analysis of the bitter quarrel, which on the death of President Harrison speedily developed between his successor, President Tyler, and the Whig party, the historical echoes of which rang, until recently, in depreciation of Tyler. Tyler we now know to have been honest, patriotic and able, if somewhat vain and over-ambitious.¹² Merely recalling the part which the project for another United States bank played in the quarrel, we must remind the reader that the tariff played a hardly less important role. The issue which Tyler was to make particularly his own was that of the annexation of

Texas, and undoubtedly he was moved both by a truly patriotic desire to bring Texas into the United States and by a just concern over the possible prevention of this through British influence. It is also true that he aspired to be elected President. He fought a difficult fight, with only a small group of really devoted supporters, Wise one of the most important. The Democrats were quite willing to support him as against Clay and Webster, but in view of the past, unless some new issues worked a change, Tyler could hardly hope to be restored to such grace in the Democratic fold as to become the candidate of that party for the Presidency.

If on Tyler's part Texas was the leading issue, in the mind of Calhoun it was subordinate to two others—the tariff, and the defence of slave property against outside interference. Of the latter we shall speak below. As to the tariff, out of the maelstrom of Tyler's first months, the year 1842 brought to pass the law which in contrast with the reductions of the preceding ten years was characterized by a distinct return to protectionism. Against this the southern leaders flared up as of old.¹³ Their grievance was not merely against the Whigs, to whom protectionism was a legitimate and basic tenet. It was the protectionist element within their own party which they more bitterly condemned.

Calhoun thought that Van Buren and his chief aide, Silas Wright of New York—although under deep obligations to himself and his southern friends for the help which these had rendered in 1840 and before—had broken definite pledges in regard to those two matters which to him seemed all important, the tariff and the question of abolition.¹⁴ Long ambitious to attain to the

Presidency and convinced of the need of reformation in the Government, he became himself an active candidate for the Democratic nomination for the campaign of 1844. "I think," wrote one of his trusted friends to another, in 1842, "we can make Calhoun President, and then we will retire to a more private and peaceful life with an assurance that the ægis of his intellect is over us, our rights, and the rights of our children."¹⁵ But it was not to be. Not only did the Democrats of the northern states have favourite sons, like Cass and Buchanan, to put forward if Van Buren should not command the necessary support, but with few exceptions the politicians in the South, outside of South Carolina, were afraid to risk one who had been so marked a figure. At length Calhoun, who had resigned, some time before, from the Senate, now let his name be withdrawn from the canvass, unwilling to accept the kind of national convention which that of 1844 was sure to be. His letter of withdrawal had contained severe reflections on Van Buren, but these personal allusions he saw fit to strike out. Some of his friends talked of holding an independent convention, but he disapproved. He even refused to accept a re-election to the Senate, and congratulated himself that he had escaped from "the fraudulent game of President-making." Calhoun seems to have been fully persuaded that Van Buren would be the Democratic nominee, and would be disastrously defeated by Clay.¹⁶

Concerning the part which Texas might be made to play in the approaching election, Calhoun was rather reticent,¹⁷ but if this was his attitude, it was not that of his friends. These began to consider the relation

which the agitation of this question might bear to the candidacy of Calhoun, and found in it a new and solidifying issue over and above the hackneyed topics of Van Buren, tariff and abolition. Among those who pressed this on Calhoun were some very close to Tyler, including Upshur, the Secretary of State.¹⁸ Allied to this were several propositions to the effect that Calhoun should accept a place in Tyler's Cabinet. On this point the evidence is somewhat conflicting. There was a story, which does not seem well supported by contemporary evidence, that the Secretaryship of State had been offered to Calhoun and declined by him before Upshur was appointed.¹⁹ In 1844 it was rumoured that the Treasury Department would be offered to Calhoun, and many friends advised him to accept the offer if made.²⁰

This was the political situation when Upshur died and Wise forced Calhoun upon President Tyler. It is not hard to surmise what was the ground of Tyler's hesitation; in all probability the Secretary of State would overshadow the President. If we speculate upon the considerations other than those purely personal by which Wise persuaded the President, we may be quite certain that the chief of these was the realization of the usefulness of Calhoun's great powers in continuing and bringing to a successful result the contest with Great Britain which Upshur had left impending.

It has been remarked by a thoughtful writer upon the history of our foreign relations that "by 1815 diplomacy had ceased to shape politics; after 1830 politics began to shape diplomacy."²¹ To no period is the remark more thoroughly appropriate than to that which followed the death of Secretary Upshur.

CHAPTER II

THE DEFENDER OF SOUTHERN RIGHTS

THE traditional account of the great sectional struggle in the United States, emanating from New England sources and dating back to the time of the controversy over slavery, used to speak of the "aggressive slavocracy"; but calmer and more detached study has demonstrated that the attitude of southern leaders was rather that of defence than attack.²² Convinced, rightly or wrongly, of the impracticability of abolition in the southern states; fully persuaded of the constitutionality of slavery; and conscious that they had no desire to interfere with the domestic policies of the northern states; the southerners bitterly resented what has been called the abolition crusade, and found in the doctrine of state rights a defence of self-government against interference on the part of the North. This is not the place to discuss that part of the question; it is sufficient to recall the "Personal Liberty Laws," the abolitionist propaganda through the mails, the controversy in Congress over petitions for abolition, and the suggested amendments that looked to overturning part of the fundamental compromise of the Constitution—the so-called federal ratio by which five slaves counted as three white men in the representation of the southern states. What concerns us here is the place of slavery and the abolition thereof in our foreign relations at the time when the executive control of our diplomacy lay in the hands of the greatest of southern leaders.

In considering this aspect of the question, it is to be remembered that the New England abolitionists were in touch with those in England;²³ that Canada was without slavery; and that in the British West Indies the Negroes had recently been emancipated. The French were considering plans for abolition in their West India Islands.²⁴ The Republic of Mexico had formally put an end to Negro slavery, though the actual condition of the peons might be worse than that of the slaves in the southern states. British agents, if not the British Government, were zealously promoting the abolition of slavery in Texas. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Calhoun, though he had a great respect for Great Britain, and both in 1842 and in 1846 stood stoutly for peace between that country and our own, nevertheless, in 1843 and 1844, felt deep resentment against British policy in regard to the Negro question. Moreover, he had worked out a logical reason for Great Britain's interest in abolition and found this reason to be not devotion to humanitarian ideas, but a desire to control the great products of the tropics.

On September 8, 1843, Calhoun wrote to Duff Green to the effect that the great point of policy for the older and more advanced nations was to command the trade of the newer and less advanced. That could not be done except by opening a free trade in provisions and raw material with them. The effect of the contrary policy was not only to cripple their commerce and manufactures, by curtailing exchanges; but to force the newer and less advanced portion to become prematurely their competitors. This England now saw and felt, and it must either adopt free trade or use force to maintain

commercial and manufacturing superiority. If force were resorted to, the blow would first be struck at the United States, Brazil, and other slave-holding countries, for the obvious reason that the abolition of slavery would transfer the production of cotton, rice, sugar and other products to the colonial possessions of England, and would consummate the monopoly of these great staples, and through them a monopoly of the trade of the world. To this motive Calhoun ascribed the movements of England in Texas and elsewhere on the subject of abolition.²⁵

Certainly some evidence in favour of Calhoun's theory was to be discovered in the differential system of the British sugar duties, through which the British Government endeavoured to combine with a system of tariffs its ideas as to promoting the abolition of slavery. It was the purpose of the British laws to favour, first, their own islands; and, secondly, at a higher rate of duty the countries which had abolished slavery, while the highest tax was placed upon sugar imported from countries, such as Brazil, that had slave labour. This arrangement was attacked time and again by the Liberals in England, who pointed out the inconsistency of discriminating against slave-grown sugar, while slave-grown tobacco and cotton were subject to no such differentiation.²⁶

Much more important than this parliamentary system of rewards and punishments were some of the results of abolition in the British West Indies. In those islands provision was made at the time of emancipation for a system of apprenticeship; but in the light of humanitarian criticism, this, too, was abandoned, and as a great falling off in production resulted, the British

Government tried to import labourers, such as coolies, and also to use as free labourers the slaves which the British cruisers captured from vessels engaged in the now-outlawed slave trade.²⁷ If, on the one hand, this might be a well-intentioned effort to meet the labour problem, to the South it seemed merely the perpetuation of slavery under another name. It does not require much effort of the imagination to see how southern planters would have resented, if they had known of it, the inquiry made to Upshur by Fox, the British minister to the United States, as to whether Great Britain might import free coloured people from the United States to its possessions. Upshur's answer to this was polite but firm in its disapproval.²⁸

Furthermore, under its various treaties for the abolition of the slave trade, Great Britain had succeeded in securing the establishment of mixed commissions for the adjudication of slave-trading cases, which enabled the British Government to establish British officers in Brazil, in Cuba, and elsewhere, quite outside its regular diplomatic and consular service.²⁹ In Brazil, our minister, G. H. Proffit, reported the activity of British agents.³⁰ In Cuba, between 1840 and 1843, there were constant stories of slave insurrections, and rumours of possible British interference,³¹ and in June and July, 1843, R. M. Harrison, our consul at Kingston, Jamaica, wrote to Secretary Upshur a rather sensational warning concerning the designs of the notorious David Turnbull, who was then in Kingston at the head of the English and Portuguese commission for captured Africans. Turnbull, Harrison alleged, was there for the purpose of stirring up insurrection in Cuba, and the southern states of the

United States should take vigorous precautions.³² On the first day of January 1844, our consul at Matanzas, Cuba, sent information concerning a serious insurrection that took place in the vicinity of that city. Our consul at Cardenas reported a similar outbreak.³³ Whether this was or was not a part of a scheme for insurrection throughout the whole island³⁴ is a question that need not be settled here. Coming as it did on top of the previous disturbances, this evidence of disquiet in Cuba was taken very seriously by our Government. The *Lawrence* was sent to Matanzas, and Calhoun later instructed Campbell to find out the causes of the revolt and the part, if any, which foreigners might have had in promoting it.³⁵ Some months later, A. H. Everett, brother of Edward Everett, and formerly minister to Spain, sent to Calhoun a letter which he had received from Paris that bore the date of March 20, 1844, which was entirely confirmatory concerning the insurrection, and added the charge that the British Government and abolitionists, exasperated by the continuation of the slave trade in violation of the treaties with England, scarcely concealed their hostile intentions upon Cuba. Everett connected this with the policy of England in Texas.³⁶

At the time, therefore, when Upshur died and Calhoun was called to be Secretary of State, there was in the possession of the Department a long and wide accumulation of information, genuine or exaggerated, which seemed to reveal a serious danger to southern institutions in the attitude of the great naval and commercial Empire of Great Britain. It was to be the part of the great leader of the South, already indignant at the attacks of New England abolitionism, to put behind

the interests of that part of the country which he particularly represented all the resources of the Government of the United States and to demand that foreign governments keep their hands off.

As we have shown, the problem was many-sided, but the most pressing matter was the threatened abolition of slavery through British influence, in Texas. With regard to this, a confidential letter which Calhoun wrote to Secretary Upshur, August 27, 1843, recently discovered in the Archives of the Department of State, and hitherto not published,³⁷ throws a clear light upon Calhoun's ideas; written as it was, at the time when the reports of England's activities made by Ashbel Smith and Duff Green had reached this country:

"You do not, in my opinion, attach too much importance to the designs of Great Britain in Texas. That she is using all her diplomatic arts and influence to abolish slavery there, with the intention of abolishing it in the United States, there can no longer be a doubt. The proceedings of the abolition meeting recently held in London, & the answer of Lord Aberdeen to the Committee, which, they appointed to call on him in reference to the subject, taken in connection, fully establishes the facts on both points.

"That her object is power and monopoly, and abolition but the pretext, I hold to be not less clear. Her conduct affords the most conclusive proof. No nation, in ancient, or modern time, ever pursued dominion & commercial monopoly more perseveringly & vehemently than she has. She unites in herself the ambition of Rome and the avarice of Carthage.

"If she can carry out her schemes in Texas, & through them her designs against the Southern States, it would prove the profoundest & most successful stroke of policy she ever made; and would go far towards giving her the exclusive control of the cotton trade, the greatest trade, by far, of modern Commerce. This she sees and is prepared to exert every nerve to accomplish it.

"The danger is great & menacing, involving in its consequences the safety of the Union and the very existence of the South; and the question is, what is to be done? On that you desire my views. I shall give them freely and frankly.

"In my opinion, the first step ought to be a demand on the British government for explanation [*sic*]. There are sufficient facts to warrant it, before the publick, & I presume you have others unknown to it. The demand ought to be accompanied by a forcible statement, explanatory of the danger of the measure to our peace & security, and its certain tendency to involve the two countries in the most deadly conflict. That ought to be followed by a suitable representation to the Texian government, tracing its hostile and dangerous character, both to them & us, accompanied by the expression of the most friendly feelings & disposition; and a communication to our Minister in Mexico apprizing him of the facts & the course adopted, with instructions to baffle, as far as it may be possible, the attempts of the British government to draw Mexico into her schemes. In addition, an able minister, completely identified, with the South, and taken from South of the Potomack out [*sic*] to be

sent to France, and be instructed to make suitable representations, explanatory of the ambitious & monopolizing spirit [*sic*] of Great Britain in this movement on Texas, and to show how far it would go to consummate her schemes of universal dominion & monopoly, should she succeed in her design. The like representation should be made to the Prussian Government, through our Minister at Berlin on the subject. The part of Germany under the control & influence of Prussia begins to be jealous of Great Britain, on the subject of commerce. All these papers should be drawn up with the utmost care, & so as to be calculated to make a deep impression on the publick mind generally, & to rouse the South should they be called for at the next Session, as they ought, if Great Britain should not explicitly disavow. In that event, the Message ought to take due notice of the subject.

“In the meantime, I am of the impression, with you, that the attention of the people of the South ought to be turned to the subject, but not through the papers of this State. I have taken so prominent a stand on all subjects connected with abolition, that any movement, at this time, in this stte [*sic*] would be regarded as intended for electioneering & would do more harm, than good. I am decidedly of the opinion, that it ought to commence in Virginia, & through the Columns of the Enquirer, and that the opening & leading articles should be from your Department & pen. No one else, has the whole subject so fully before him, or can do it as full justice. You can have it communicated by some friend. They can be copied & followed up in the Southern papers.

"I am of the impression, that the question of annexation ought not to be agitated till discussion has prepared the publick mind to realize the danger; but assurance ought to be given to the Texian government of the hearty cooperation of the Executive towards effecting it, when the proper time arrives.

"Connected with this subject, Cuba deserves attention. Great Britain is at work there, as well as in Texas; and both are equally important to our safety. Much can be done in France in reference to each. Would it not be well for our govt. & that of France to enter into a guaranty of its possession to Spain, against the interference of any other power? The overthrow of the British influence there & the establishment of the French, would seem to be favourable to an arrangement of the kind. I throw it out for reflection. Would it not also be well, if the West should push the Oregon question, to unite with it the annexation of Texas, in the shape of an amendment of the bill and make them go hand & hand?"

How far Secretary Upshur, at the time when Calhoun's letter was written, had anticipated his suggestions, and how far he later acted upon them may be determined from the reading of the sketch of Upshur in this volume. To what extent Calhoun later, as Secretary of State, followed out his own ideas we shall now proceed to ascertain.

CHAPTER III

THE REPLY TO PAKENHAM

WHEN Calhoun, after arranging his affairs at Fort Hill, had reached Washington at the end of March, 1844,³⁸ his first task was the completion of the annexation treaty, the negotiation of which had been interrupted by Upshur's death. By the 11th of April, Calhoun was ready to give on behalf of the United States a formal affirmative to the inquiry which Van Zandt had made of Upshur concerning the military protection promised by Murphy to Texas, which Nelson, the Secretary *ad interim*, had withdrawn.³⁹ Calhoun merely promised at this time to concentrate near the frontier a strong naval force and all the disposable troops, and said that "during the pendency of the Treaty" the President would "use all the means placed within his power by the Constitution to protect Texas from all foreign invasion."⁴⁰ This satisfied Van Zandt and his colleague, Henderson, and the next day, April 12, they and Calhoun signed the Treaty of Annexation.⁴¹ By this document the Republic of Texas was to cede to the United States all its territories, to be annexed to the United States as one of its territories, subject to the same Constitutional provisions as other territories. The citizens of Texas were to be incorporated into the Union as soon as might be, and admitted to be full citizens of the United States. Real-estate titles and claims, valid under the laws of Texas, were to be so

held by the United States, and all unsettled claims were to be adjudicated. The public lands of Texas were ceded to the United States, which should provide Texas with the equivalent of the grant made to states of its own domain for education. The United States was to assume the public debt of Texas to the extent of not more than \$10,000,000. Upon the exchange of ratifications, which must take place within six months, the President was to appoint a commissioner who should proceed to Texas, receive the transfer of the territory and its archives, and exercise all executive authority there until provision was made by law.⁴²

At the time when the Texas treaty was signed, Calhoun entertained little doubt of its approval by the Senate, persuaded, perhaps, by the optimism of Tyler; and the British minister expressed himself as less sanguine than before of its rejection.⁴³ A copy of the treaty was sent at once to Texas and our chargé, Murphy, accompanied the bearer of it to present it to Sam Houston, who was now in his second term as President. Murphy communicated to Houston the same promise of protection which Calhoun had made to the Texan envoys. Houston, Murphy said, received this message with an expression of gratitude for the generous and noble policy of the United States. But we now know that at almost the same time Anson Jones, the Texan Secretary of State, informed the British chargé that the conclusion of the treaty was a source of great mortification and disappointment to General Houston and himself.⁴⁴ The explanation of these very contradictory statements will appear hereafter. Calhoun's next problem was to placate, if possible, the Mexican Government.

Before Secretary Upshur died, he had tried to persuade the Mexican minister, Almonte, that the annexation of Texas would not hurt Mexico, and had understood him to express some agreement with this point of view.⁴⁵ On April 18 Almonte reported to his home Government a conference with Calhoun held the preceding day. The latter, informing him that the treaty had been signed, did not believe that this should be thought a cause of offence on the part of Mexico. Though it had not recognized any right of Mexico over Texas, the American Government would give some compensation if Mexico would renounce its pretensions. This was the proposal of an adjustment of the boundary, and Calhoun recalled that Texas, through the intervention of England, had offered \$5,000,000 for the recognition of its independence, and the United States might do as much if the boundaries proposed were accepted. Almonte replied that he wished to have nothing to do with this negotiation.⁴⁶

We must leave the Mexican diplomat in this somewhat excited frame of mind and follow to Mexico Calhoun's messenger, Colonel G. L. Thompson, who was sent to bear instructions to the new chargé, B. E. Green,⁴⁷ to inform the Mexican Government that the treaty had been signed; that the step had been forced on the United States in consequence of Britain's interference in Texas; that the United States, he was to say, was actuated by no feeling of disrespect to the Government of Mexico; and that the President wanted to settle all questions which might grow out of this treaty, including the question of boundary, on the most liberal and satisfactory terms. To this end the boundary had not been specified

in the treaty.⁴⁸ But Green and Bocanegra, the Mexican Secretary of Relations, fell into hopeless disagreement, and Thompson left Mexico bearing news that that Government was preparing for war. He did not reach the capital of the United States, however, until June 17, 1844, the day on which the Congress of the United States adjourned.⁴⁹

It was April 8, only a little over a week after he had arrived in Washington, and before he had signed the Texas treaty, that Calhoun held with Richard Pakenham, the representative of Great Britain in Washington,⁵⁰ a conversation of which we have, fortunately, a very detailed account, written by Pakenham himself. In reply to an expression on Calhoun's part of his desire to accomplish annexation in a manner agreeable to Mexico, to England, and any other interested power, Pakenham frankly replied that he could not discover any arrangement by which it could be agreeable to England. Such an important alteration in the territorial distribution of the American continent could never be viewed with indifference by England, and he reserved to his Government to take whatever steps might be advisable. This, Calhoun received with calmness, and seemed desirous to bring about a correspondence on the subject; but Pakenham avoided it.

Pakenham deduced from Calhoun's remarks that the latter feared that the "known and avowed wishes of her Majesty's Government on the subject of abolition, seconded by the exertions of the Abolition Societies in London and elsewhere, would, in the present position of Texas, exercise an influence so fatal to the security of the slave-holding states of the American Union, as to

render the annexation of Texas a measure of self-defense" no longer to be postponed. Calhoun referred to an instruction sent by Lord Aberdeen December 26, 1844, and lately communicated to the American Government, of which we shall give account below, but, while acknowledging the sincerity and good faith of all that was said therein, found even in that communication enough to convince him of the expediency of the course he was about to adopt. Calhoun told Pakenham of his intended offer to Mexico, and when Pakenham expressed his belief that Mexico would not accept, and mentioned the possibility of war, Calhoun did not seem to think much of that danger and suggested that the charitable anxiety of England as to Mexico might be quieted by an engagement on the part of the United States, to which England, and perhaps France, also might be made parties, against ulterior encroachments on the Mexican territory. Pakenham did not feel himself to be authorized to accede to this, but ventured a counter suggestion that all three governments should severally bind themselves to abstain from any encroachment on the independence of Texas. "But this remark," Pakenham added, "was received by Mr. Calhoun with a smile, indicating how little such a proposition was in harmony with his present purpose."⁵¹

Lord Aberdeen's instruction to Pakenham of December 26, 1843,⁵² to which Calhoun had alluded, had represented another attempt to quiet American apprehension concerning British designs with reference to slavery, and particularly with regard to Texas. In this Pakenham was told to explain to the Government of the

United States the "clear and simple" policy of Great Britain: it desired the recognition of the independence of Texas generally, and especially by Mexico, but not from ambition or self-interest, except with regard to commerce; and it had no occult design with reference to its influence in Texas or Mexico, or with reference to slavery in Texas. While Great Britain would rejoice if Texas should abolish slavery, nevertheless, provided other states should act with equal forbearance, Texas and Mexico could make their own unfettered arrangements. Lastly, Aberdeen, after remarking not very tactfully that "we have never in our treatment of them made any difference between the slave-holding and the free states of the Union," declared that although the British Government would not desist from open and honest efforts for the abolition of slavery throughout the world, they would neither openly nor secretly resort to any measures which could tend to disturb the internal tranquillity of the southern states or thereby affect the prosperity of the American Union.⁵³

Pakenham had not presented to Upshur Aberdeen's instruction of December 26 until a few days before Upshur's death; and Nelson, the Secretary *ad interim*, had promised him an acknowledgment of its receipt.⁵⁴ The duty of replying to Aberdeen Calhoun now took up; but instead of a formal acknowledgment, the Secretary wrote a long note dated April 18, 1844. We must content ourselves with the briefest summary of this celebrated note. The President, Calhoun said, regarded with deep concern "the avowal for the first time made to this Government, 'that Great Britain desires, and is constantly exerting herself to procure the

general abolition of slavery throughout the world.' " So long as Great Britain's efforts towards abolition were confined to its own colonies, no other country had a right to complain, but when Great Britain undertook to abolish it throughout the world, it became the duty of all other countries whose safety might be endangered to protect themselves.

The President regarded, with deeper concern, Aberdeen's avowal of Great Britain's desire to see slavery abolished in Texas. For Great Britain to attempt to accomplish this, by diplomacy, through pressure upon Mexico to make abolition a condition of the recognition of the independence of Texas, confirmed, Calhoun said, the President's previous impressions regarding England's policy, and led to the conclusion that it would be difficult for Texas to resist what Great Britain desired; and if Texas could not resist, that would be dangerous to the Union. The control of Texas by Great Britain, besides arousing hostile feelings, would expose the weakest part of our boundary to inroads, and place in Great Britain's power the most efficient means of abolishing slavery in the neighbouring states of the Union. The Texas treaty had been concluded as the most effectual step against the threatened danger.

There followed an argument for autonomy in the decision as to slavery. While abolition might be humane and wise in the British Dominions, it had not followed that it would be wise in the United States. But whether it would or not, it belonged to each to determine for itself. It was even a question for each state in the United States, and not for the federal Government. The last part of the note was a decided challenge to

both Old and New England. In this was some statistical material, the reliability of which was later strenuously, if rather unsuccessfully, challenged. Calhoun undertook to demonstrate that with regard to disease, insanity and crime, emancipation had not improved the African in the free states, but the contrary, whereas in the South the Africans were as well off as the labouring population of any country in Christendom, and in no other condition or any other age or country had the Negro attained so high an elevation in morals, intelligence or civilization. If emancipation had such poor results where there were so few Negroes, what would happen where the races were nearly equal in number? Therefore, whatever Great Britain's policy in its own dominions, slavery was a condition necessary to the prosperity and peace of the states in which it existed. The next day, April 19, Pakenham somewhat testily replied to this note. He forbore to discuss with Calhoun the annexation project, but he disclaimed vehemently the responsibility which Calhoun sought to throw upon Great Britain for driving the United States to that policy. Calhoun waited more than a week and replied, April 27, at some length, correcting what he considered errors of interpretation on Pakenham's part, and trying especially to meet Aberdeen's point that it was in no secret or harmful way that England was directing its efforts to the humane course of abolition. It was not the *method* to which Calhoun objected, but the theory that abolition was humane. This he tried to show by the facts adduced. Therefore, Great Britain could not in *any* way promote abolition in the slave states without rendering worse the condition of the Negroes and with-

out disturbing the internal tranquillity of those states. To this, Pakenham replied, April 30, with a mere acknowledgment, and with a statement that Calhoun's note had been transmitted to the British Government.⁵⁵

Few diplomatic papers have been the subject of more violent discussion than Calhoun's letters to Pakenham. We may pass over the bitter contemporary denunciations of Benton and the strongly biased criticisms of Von Holst.⁵⁶ In the most careful study of the matter which has yet been made Justin H. Smith has spoken of the "evident artfulness" of Calhoun's first letter and has expressed the opinion that Calhoun's obvious purpose to leave the impression that only now had the United States become aware of the abolition views of the British was plainly disingenuous, and that to intimate that the treaty with Texas had resulted from this announcement was a misrepresentation.⁵⁷ Perhaps it might be argued that Calhoun technically saved himself from the former criticism, inasmuch as it was not the mere acquisition of knowledge, but the avowal for the first time made to this Government—that is, in a formal diplomatic communication which could be noticed officially—which formed the basis for Calhoun's argument; and, secondly, it might be noted that it was this avowal of the desire to see slavery abolished in Texas, and the inference which the President derived therefrom—that Great Britain was operating upon Mexico—which, Calhoun said, had confirmed the President's *previous* impressions as to the policy of Great Britain. It is entirely true, however, that the Government of the United States had begun negotiations with Texas long before it had received this direct

and authoritative statement from Aberdeen; and to the extent that Calhoun suggested the contrary, his letter was, indeed, disingenuous; but on the other hand, technically the positive action—the *conclusion* of the treaty—was not accomplished until after the receipt of Aberdeen's communication. After all is said, there is no doubt as to the general meaning of the letter—that British interference had justified the Government of the United States in taking up annexation, which it had refused to do before.

Likewise, there has been much speculation why Calhoun chose the narrow ground of slavery rather than the broader bases which he might have used—such as British interference in American politics, or the British desire to secure cotton with a favourable tariff arrangement with Texas. That this should be puzzling is not the fault of Calhoun, for he wrote to several friends to explain his course. The clearest of these statements is found in a letter apparently hitherto unpublished, which he wrote May 9, 1844, to Governor J. R. Mathews, of Georgia:

“The time is come, when England must be met on the abolition question. You will have seen, that I have placed the Texian question on that issue. I am resolved to keep it there, be the consequence what it may. I shall rise at every step in the correspondence, which may grow out of it. Mr. Pakenham replied to my communication, and I have answered his reply. I took the broad ground that our policy was to interfere with no other country, and to permit none to interfere with ours in any respect whatever, as it

related to our internal concerns. . . . It [the correspondence] will I doubt not recommence on that side of the Atlantick with a good deal of warmth. I shall meet it without flinching, let what will come. . . ."⁵⁸

CHAPTER IV

DIPLOMACY VS. POLITICS

ON April 22, 1844, the treaty was sent to the Senate, accompanied by many documents; and, under the lead of Calhoun's bitterest foe, Thomas Hart Benton, others were called for from time to time. The effect of the papers transmitted⁵⁹ was not wholly impressive, because the real source of the information possessed by the Administration was the communications of Ashbel Smith, the diplomatic representative of another power, and this could not be made public; and the name of Duff Green, who was understood to be the author of what was reported, only served to enrage the partisans in the Senate. In the delay of ten days which took place between the negotiation of the treaty and the transmission of it to the Senate, Benton found evidence of a deep-laid plot,⁶⁰ but there is no reason to impeach the truth of the explanation which Tyler made confidentially to ex-President Jackson.⁶¹ They wished, Tyler said, to include Calhoun's reply to Aberdeen's letter, which it took some time to prepare; the process of transcribing the documents which were to be transmitted with the treaty was slow; and it was advisable to await the definite appointment of a successor to W. R. King, who, as we shall see, had resigned from the Senate to become minister to France.

Now, indeed, diplomacy gave place to politics. When the treaty reached the Senate, the date of the

national convention of the Whig party was only ten days distant. There was no doubt that the Whigs would nominate Henry Clay. Clay had spent part of the winter in the southern states, and had most positively told Charles Elliot, the British chargé to Texas, when he met the latter in New Orleans, that no scheme of annexation would be accepted by the United States—a piece of information, of course, of no little interest to the British Foreign Office. Now, in his famous letter, written in Raleigh, North Carolina, April 17, Clay came out strongly against annexation. When to this letter was added the expression of similar opinions on the part of Webster, it cannot be wondered that the Whig convention that met in Baltimore May 1, and unanimously nominated Clay, obeyed his wish and omitted any reference to Texas.

The same day that brought to the public the letter of Clay, the *Washington Globe* printed a longer communication from Martin Van Buren—the famous Hammett letter. Van Buren, as President, had refused to take up annexation. Now, he was the leading one of a group of aspirants for the nomination of the Democratic party, and up to this time had possessed a more probable chance of success than any other. As has been pointed out above, Calhoun, the most important southern candidate, had withdrawn from the canvass. Then, of a sudden, Calhoun had passed from the status of a discouraged competitor to the Secretaryship of State, with the handling of a new and exciting issue. In the Hammett letter, Van Buren also came out against annexation, but in such a way as to leave the door open for a later acceptance of it.⁶² It has been said

that Van Buren risked his political career for a principle, but one may question whether Van Buren's expression of dissent from the annexation policy was not determined in a large part by the political situation which existed at the moment.

At any rate, when these two letters were published in Washington, April 27, and the same day the *New York Evening Post* printed the treaty and the accompanying documents which had been obtained through the faithlessness of Tappan, of Ohio, to the obligation of secrecy, the political cauldron began to boil.⁶³ Many of the Democrats, of course, were shocked at Van Buren's announcement, and of these, the most important was Andrew Jackson, who welcomed the rapprochement between Tyler and the Democrats and had been quite willing to make peace with his former critic, although he had seen no reason to place Tyler instead of Van Buren at the head of the party. Jackson was enthusiastic for the annexation of Texas. He was ready to support both annexation and Van Buren; but this position it was impossible to maintain after the Hammett letter. Jackson came to believe that Texas was more important than Van Buren, and that Van Buren should withdraw. Both Jackson and his friend James K. Polk attributed Van Buren's course to the influence of Benton.⁶⁴

There must have been some temptation to Calhoun, after Van Buren's letter, to yield to the pressure of some of his friends and return to the canvass, either through the Democratic convention or outside of it, but he assured Charles J. Ingersoll, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representa-

tives, that he would abide by Texas and not be a candidate for the Presidency.⁶⁵ President Tyler, of course, was such a candidate, having been nominated by a convention of his own. If Van Buren were nominated, many Democrats would go to Tyler, and Clay would be elected. This catastrophe was avoided when the Democratic convention, through the skilful manipulation of R. J. Walker, G. J. Pillow, and George Bancroft, eliminated Van Buren and nominated James K. Polk. Polk was out and out an annexationist, and the Democratic platform endorsed the annexation of Texas and the re-occupation of Oregon, and undertook to present a united front to Clay and the Whigs. With Polk nominated, Tyler's candidacy would only endanger the success of annexation, and in the course of time, Tyler, prompted by Jackson, gracefully withdrew.

It is easily seen, therefore, that the merits of the question of annexation were not the most important consideration in determining the action which, after much debate, the Senate took June 8, 1844. Instead of the necessary two-thirds in favour of the treaty, there was a majority of more than two-thirds against it. Thirty-five voted for rejection, including all the Whig senators but one, and including the senators of every northern state except New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. In the South, North Carolina, Georgia, and Missouri divided their votes. Seven Democrats, including Benton, voted in the negative: the friends of Van Buren, though the party was committed to annexation, were not deprived of the pleasure of killing the treaty of Tyler and Calhoun. Among those who defended the treaty it may be noted no one spoke more effectively than

James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, who, as events turned out, was in a few months to succeed Calhoun as Secretary of State.⁶⁶

Since Congress was to adjourn June 17, there were about ten days left to Tyler and Calhoun to reshape the issue and keep it alive. According to Tyler's biographer,⁶⁷ Calhoun was greatly discouraged and thought of resigning, but of this his letters give no indication. Two days after the rejection of the treaty, Tyler suggested to the House of Representatives that the power of Congress was fully competent to accomplish what might have been done by treaty. This idea of annexation by act of Congress or joint resolution had been thought of years before, and a decision so to proceed had been reached between Calhoun and Ingersoll as early as May 6. It had been arranged between Calhoun, Ingersoll and Van Zandt, June 3, that the President should send this message to the House to serve as an appeal to the people on the subject of annexation when Congress should adjourn. A new representative was to be sent to Texas. There would then remain the question whether Congress should be convoked in special session early in September if public opinion should have forced a change in the view of both houses.⁶⁸ Thus, annexation was thrown into politics; but other matters, as well, were presented for decision to the voters, such as the question of nativism, the religious issue of Roman Catholicism, the maintenance or reduction of the protective tariff. It seems quite probable that the combination of a demand for the whole of Oregon with that for the re-annexation of Texas influenced very greatly the northwestern states. Some of the representatives of

these states later alleged that a positive bargain had been made at Baltimore, but it seems probable no formal agreement worthy of this name was entered into.⁶⁹

Again, the annexation question itself was not confined either to strict party or to strict sectional lines. By no means all southerners favoured annexation, and it found many supporters in the North. Some Whigs were for it, though the majority of that party, following the opinion of Clay's Raleigh letter, was in opposition. On the other hand, many Democrats differed with their brethren on this issue.⁷⁰

The rather unusual linking of a diplomatic question with internal politics found its most bitter result in two states, Massachusetts and South Carolina. Somewhat as in 1808 and in 1812, a definite threat came from Massachusetts, which on March 15, 1844, added to resolutions previously passed on the subject "that the project of the annexation of Texas, unless arrested on the threshold may tend to drive these states into a dissolution of the Union"; and just a little more than a year later the legislature refused "to acknowledge the Act of the Government of the United States, authorizing the admission of Texas, as a legal act in any way binding her from using her utmost exertions, in co-operation with other states, by every lawful and Constitutional measure, to annul its conditions and defeat its accomplishment."⁷¹

In South Carolina the rejection of the treaty found many already so much aggrieved by the attitude of the North with regard to the tariff and abolition that they were ready to proceed to radical measures. Here Calhoun, though absent from the state, by his counsels

intervened, held the hotheads in check, and successfully prevented action on the part of South Carolina. He did not escape criticism on the part of some of his friends. James H. Hammond, for example, remarked, as to a plan under consideration by the South Carolina delegates at Washington, that "at the eleventh hour Calhoun came in and broke it up, chanting praises to the Union and peace."⁷²

To offset the extremists, effective work was accomplished in Union-loving Tennessee. Here dwelt the nominee, and a group of active lieutenants who both through correspondence and through a great Democratic meeting in Nashville strove to maintain friendship between northern and southern Democrats. Here were also Andrew Jackson and his trusted confidant, Andrew Jackson Donelson. In this connection Donelson wrote Calhoun July 29, sending him a copy of a letter which Jackson had written to Houston, to impress on him the significance of the designs of Great Britain and France, and Donelson expressed his own fear that Houston might not be able to stand up before his own people if the guaranties promised by England and France were accompanied by terms very favourable to Texas.⁷³ About the same time, Jackson, in a fiery letter to Polk, expressed his wish that the President should take the ground that the treaty of 1803, by which we acquired Texas, could not be abrogated unless with the consent of France and of the Texans. Congress, he thought, could not resist this appeal. This, Jackson said, he had suggested through his friend Gadsden, to Calhoun. Jackson urged also that "Texan corps" should be raised throughout the South and West, as this would carry

terror into Mexico and might arrest any attempt at invasion. But Calhoun made it clear to Donelson that Jackson's plan was too radical for Tyler, who, said the Secretary, "is of the opinion that his position is too weak to undertake so bold and decided a movement, and I must say, that my opinion concurs with his."⁷⁴

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND AND FRANCE CONSIDER INTERVENTION

WE must now interrupt the narrative of the American efforts to secure the annexation of Texas in order to make clear the endeavours of European powers to defeat that purpose. The earlier moves of Great Britain in the direction have been sufficiently set forth in the preceding sketch. At the time when Calhoun took up his duties, Lord Aberdeen had arranged with M. Guizot for co-operation between England and France in maintaining the independence of Texas: and Pageot, the French minister, had been definitely empowered to present to the American Government a formal protest against the projected annexation. But, as we learn from the same important dispatch in which Pakenham told of his conversation with Calhoun, Pageot and Pakenham agreed that a simple protest, unsupported by "an intimation of more decisive measures of resistance," would be futile and might weaken the opposition in the Senate.⁷⁵

At the time of Calhoun's appointment we had no minister to France, for the Senate had rejected the nomination of Henry A. Wise. On April 9, the day after the conversation of Calhoun and Pakenham, Tyler nominated William R. King, of Alabama, who was promptly confirmed. In the written instructions given to King, April 23, there was no specific statement with regard

to Texas; his mission was to "strengthen, if possible, the very friendly relations so happily subsisting" between France and the United States, and the method of accomplishing this was left to his discretion.⁷⁶ But Calhoun had received from the Texan envoys, the day before, a document in which he was informed of all the previous English-French efforts up to that date; excepting, of course, the protest which Pageot and Pakenham had decided to withhold.⁷⁷ It is hard to resist the supposition that orally King was told to use his efforts to find out more about the plans of France and England. This, at least, was what King proceeded to do.

In his first dispatch, written July 13, about a month after his arrival, our minister described the very friendly reception which had been extended to him by King Louis Philippe. Concerning Texas, the King had avowed his desire to see that state remain independent and had stressed the existence of commercial treaties between Texas and France. The American minister tried to explain that the French interest was different from that of England and would be benefited by the annexation of Texas to the United States. Louis Philippe gave him definitely to understand that in any event no steps would be taken by the Government in the slightest degree hostile or which would give the United States just cause of complaint. Rumours of the proposed joint protest of France and England against the annexation of Texas had come to our envoy's ears, but he expressed himself as skeptical about the matter.⁷⁸

In the weeks which preceded these friendly statements of the French King, a very different policy had been in fact adopted by France at the suggestion of

Lord Aberdeen. When Everett heard of the letters of Van Buren and Clay against annexation, he joyfully wrote in his diary that this "puts the extinguisher for the moment on that project." Four days later he noted that he and Aberdeen had had a private conference as individuals, which it was agreed between them should not be reported officially on either side.⁷⁹ What passed between them he did not set down, but what led to the conversation was an inquiry which, according to notice, Brougham made in the House of Lords that day, May 17, concerning the American treaty of annexation. A little later a similar question was asked in the House of Commons. In the one case, Aberdeen, and in the other, Peel, maintained an attitude of secrecy, and Peel rather brusquely said that the Government "would not follow the example set by other countries in the publication of such documents in the newspapers."⁸⁰ These colloquies, reported by Everett, were brought to the attention of Congress, June 5, by President Tyler, but the information did not serve to save the treaty. Five days later, in his message to the House, the President criticized some of the words used by the British ministers, and said: "We leave the European powers exclusive control over matters affecting their continent and the relations of their different states; the United States claim a similar exemption from any such interference on their part." He warned Great Britain against interfering.

The British and the Mexican archives reveal that Lord Aberdeen was in fact entering upon the most drastic effort at interference which had yet been undertaken. In a conversation with Don Tomás Murphy, Mexican representative at London, towards the end of May,

Aberdeen had promised that if Mexico would acknowledge the independence of Texas, he would endeavour to bring it about that France and England should unite with Mexico in guaranteeing, not only the independence of Texas, but the boundary of Mexico. If it were necessary Great Britain would go to the last extremity in support of opposition to annexation.⁸¹ Aberdeen took up the matter also with Ashbel Smith, the representative of Texas, and proposed a "diplomatic act," which should guarantee to Texas recognition and peace but prevent it from either acquiring territory beyond the Rio Grande or joining the United States. The plan was to include England, France, Texas, the United States and Mexico; but a difference from the project laid before the Mexican Government through Tomás Murphy may be noted, in that, by the diplomatic act, Mexico would be compelled if necessary to acquiesce. The consent of the United States was not expected. Ashbel Smith understood that this program included a possible war.⁸² With a somewhat grim vindication of the charges made by Upshur and Calhoun that England's abolitionist arguments, so far as that country's diplomacy was concerned, were not genuine, the question of abolition of slavery in Texas was now entirely dropped, and in a most friendly and sympathetic and therefore somewhat deceptive way, Pakenham was instructed to inform the United States that only counsel and not dictation would be used in Texas in regard to this matter.⁸³

It is necessary to consider the fate of Aberdeen's scheme. The attitude of Mexico will be considered somewhat later; in Texas it afforded another opportunity for the Government to face both ways. The plan

received the support of President Houston, who finally wrote to Anson Jones, the Secretary of State, September 24, 1844: "Let our representatives be instructed to complete the proposed arrangement for the settlement of our Mexican difficulties, as soon as possible—giving the necessary pledges, as suggested in the late dispatch of Dr. Smith on this subject." But Jones, the Secretary, did not carry out Houston's wishes, and thus no formal acceptance was given by Texas. The French Government was understood by Lord Aberdeen to have definitely accepted the plan,⁸⁴ and for some time he proceeded as though certain of this approval.

Here, again, the British and French ministers in Washington, observant of the course of events in this country, conferred with each other, and Pakenham, at least, advised his own Government to move slowly. Pakenham wrote June 27 that the rejection of the treaty did not settle the question of annexation. The presidential election would turn upon it, and, therefore, England and France should not take any steps that would injure Clay's chances. "It seems to us, my Lord, that the Gov'ts of England and France have everything to gain by the success of Mr. Clay." Aberdeen's plan should not be known in the United States until after the election, for if the plan were pressed without the consent of the United States it would probably insure the immediate annexation and occupation of Texas. If either England or France tried to act alone, this would result in the most extreme resistance.⁸⁵

Aberdeen was gravely impressed with these arguments of Pakenham, so much so that he decided to delay action. On July 18 he instructed Cowley, the British

minister in Paris, that England was disposed to defer the execution of the projected measure.⁸⁶ The French Government agreed with this policy of waiting until after the presidential election.⁸⁷ Just about this time, July 20, our minister, King, held a long conference with Guizot, of which King reported⁸⁸ that, when he had referred to the rumours that France was uniting with England in opposition to annexation, "with considerable animation, if not some impatience, Mr. Guizot at once assured me that no such step as that referred to had been taken: that on this subject France had acted for herself and in connection with no other Power." At the time, King was so well satisfied that he advised Calhoun that the United States should not be influenced by rumours of dangers from abroad which did not exist. He thought Great Britain would use no other weapon than diplomacy. The French minister had for the moment beguiled the American representative.

Calhoun was better informed. In a confidential letter to his friend, Governor Mathews of Georgia, he expressed his belief that the course of the Senate had united England and France in concerted and active interference to prevent annexation, and it was greatly to be feared that they would succeed. "The present plan is," he said, "to use their efforts with the Texan Government to withdraw the proposition for annexation, with an understanding, that it is never to be renewed. To induce it to take the step Mexico is to be forced to recognize Texas without the condition of abolishing slavery. Nothing, I fear, can defeat the plan, except resolute resistance on the part of the people of Texas, if even that can."⁸⁹

Upon the receipt, August 3, of King's first dispatch from Paris, which had reported Louis Philippe's promise that France would give the United States no cause of complaint, Calhoun framed an instruction to King dated August 12, which is familiar to students of the history of Texan annexation. In this Calhoun wrote approvingly of the distinction which our minister had drawn between the interest of France and that of England in regard to America, and entered into a lengthy discussion of Great Britain's policy in regard to slavery, to the consideration of which some attention must be given in a later chapter. In relation to our present narrative, an important part of the document was Calhoun's expression of gratification at the friendly declaration of Louis Philippe because it led to the happy inference from King's dispatch that the information which had been received concerning the joint protest against annexation on the part of Great Britain and France was in all probability without foundation.⁹⁰

It has been shown above that the immediate cause of Lord Aberdeen's withdrawal from his plan for the diplomatic act was the warning received from Pakenham, supported by Pageot, which led the British Secretary to await hopefully the election of Henry Clay, but it seems not improbable that Calhoun's instruction to King served further to discourage Louis Philippe and Guizot from any effective junction with England. At the least, as we shall see hereafter, the publication, some months later, of this dispatch of Calhoun revealed to the world the very great difference in the language which the French had used to England and to the United States respectively.

At any rate, as the months passed, the danger of any joint intervention by England and France became less and less. In Mexico, Santa Anna procrastinated until November, 1844, before indicating a willingness to accept the British suggestions and to discuss the recognition of Texas under certain guaranties; and disgusted Aberdeen by continuing to breathe forth threats against Texas. By the end of September Aberdeen had practically withdrawn his offer to Mexico, though he had not then receded from the proposals to France and to Texas. In the course of the autumn and winter it became evident that he had backed the wrong horse: Polk was elected President, not Clay. Guizot made it known to Aberdeen that France could not be counted on for the forceful execution of the diplomatic act. The Mexican minister in France perceived the change in temperature to which the election of Polk contributed, and told his Government that England would act only as a pacific mediator. Elliot, the British chargé in Texas, received word from Lord Aberdeen that England would pursue "a passive course, or rather a course of observation."⁹¹ Thus, the year 1844 came to its close with a marked arresting of Lord Aberdeen's Texan policy. Of the decided revival of his endeavours which marked the early months of 1845, we shall have more to say hereafter.

CHAPTER VI

HOWARD AND DONELSON IN TEXAS

AFTER the rejection, in May, of the nomination of Murphy, our minister to Texas, Tyler appointed as his successor Tilghman A. Howard, a friend of Sam Houston. Calhoun, moved by the fear that Great Britain might persuade Texas to withdraw from the annexation treaty, urged Howard to prevent any such dangerous consequence of the loss of the treaty and to assure the Texan Government that the President, hopeful for the future, would call an extra session whenever there might be votes enough to carry a joint resolution.⁹² This was dated June 18, shortly after the defeat of the treaty and after Tyler's subsequent message. When Howard reached Texas, he reported the prevalence of a very general sentiment in favour of annexation, together with great alarm at the threatening attitude of Mexico.⁹³ On June 19, Mexico had notified Houston of the resumption of hostilities, and the summer was filled with rumours of Mexican aggression. Great Britain held out the hope of a favourable commercial treaty, and was using the Mexican danger as a club with which to threaten Texas and at the same time was trying to persuade Mexico to recognize Texan independence.⁹⁴ In August, came a request for the aid which Calhoun had promised, but Howard replied that that promise had been made for the period when the treaty was pending and had now come to an end.⁹⁵ Calhoun, however, took

a more positive stand. While the President, he said, could not apart from Congress make war on Mexico, he could protest. To show what he had done, he sent Howard a copy of his instructions to Shannon, and told him to assure the Texan Government that when Congress met, the President would make the necessary arrangements.⁹⁶

Misfortune still hung over our interests in Texas. Howard died of yellow fever hardly two weeks after his arrival. This might have had serious results, but for the fact that Elliot, and Saligny, also, had left Texas for the United States.⁹⁷

When Howard's death made it necessary to seek a new representative of the United States, Tyler and Calhoun made perhaps the wisest and most fortunate selection possible. With the greatest promptness they chose for the vacant post Jackson's nephew by marriage, Andrew J. Donelson, of Tennessee. Donelson had been the General's private secretary and fortunately had retained the friendship of leaders in all groups of the Democratic party, and thus was able to be in touch with Van Buren and Benton, on the one hand, and with Calhoun on the other, and of course with Jackson and Sam Houston.⁹⁸ He was appointed in the middle of September, but it was the latter part of November before he reached his post.⁹⁹ Despite this delay, he arrived before the return of the British chargé, Elliot, and shortly before the inauguration of the new President, Anson Jones, December 9, 1844. A new Secretary of State, Ashbel Smith, now succeeded in Texas, but he had not yet returned from Europe, and Ebenezer Allen, former Attorney-General, was acting in his stead.¹⁰⁰

Donelson's first impression was that the British influence prevailed with the Texan Government. Houston told him that he had both encouraged the British plans and alarmed the United States with the revelation of British intrigues in order to bring about annexation when he could, but that he had been checkmated by the too great zeal of the annexationists, and he found fault with Henderson and Van Zandt for having signed the annexation treaty without sufficient pledges from the United States as to the defence of Texas. At first Houston seemed unmoved by Donelson's pleadings, for in his valedictory address he urged Texas to maintain its position firmly and not degrade itself by begging again for admission into the United States. If Texas remained independent, Houston said, the Pacific would be its boundary and it could become a nation distinguished for its wealth and power. In his inaugural address, and in a message to Congress which followed it, the new President, Jones, did not mention annexation at all. To Elliot, however, he gave emphatic assurance that if Mexico would recognize the national position of Texas, he and his friends would have strength enough to turn the people aside from any further thought of annexation. Ebenezer Allen was opposed to annexation.¹⁰¹ It was on these three, Houston, Jones, and Allen, that Donelson at first brought his arguments to bear, with great skill and pertinacity. Then his work suffered from the indiscretion of Duff Green, who had just returned from Mexico. What he had been doing there will appear later. Now, Green tried to float schemes for vast corporate charters of a speculative nature, and even launched, it was alleged, a design to revolutionize the

Californias and the northern provinces of Mexico by means of an army aided by Indians from the United States.¹⁰² When opposed by Jones, the President, he flew into a denunciation of Jones as too much influenced by British interests. This enraged the President, so much so, that, according to Elliot, he was disposed to shoot Green on the spot.¹⁰³ "If he [Green] and Mr. Calhoun do not blow up annexation," jocularly remarked Elliot, the British chargé, "it is *fire-proof*, that's all."¹⁰⁴ Donelson took the matter in hand; poured oil on the troubled waters, and apparently prevented any ill result of Green's interference.¹⁰⁵ In the Texan Senate, the Committee on Foreign Relations made a report favourable to annexation, and the House of Representatives defeated a resolution that seemed unfriendly. The Government of Texas was still facing both ways, and it developed that the real arbiter of the future of annexation was to be the people of Texas, as distinguished from their Government.

CHAPTER VII

SHANNON AND THE MEXICAN DANGER

THE reader will recall from a previous chapter that at the time when the annexation treaty was negotiated, Calhoun made approaches, first to Almonte, the Mexican minister; and, secondly, through the mission of G. L. Thompson, to the Government of Mexico; to remove, if possible, Mexico's objections to annexation; and that both of these efforts were unsuccessful. We left our chargé, B. E. Green, wrestling with the Mexican Ministers of Foreign Relations in the interval between the retirement of Waddy Thompson, the late minister to Mexico, and the arrival of Wilson Shannon, his successor. Calhoun gave Shannon his instructions June 20, 1844. The tone of these instructions was conciliatory. Calhoun called the attention of the Mexican Government to its failure to pay the last instalment, due April 30, 1844, of the awards which had been made by the joint commission established under the Convention of 1839, and for the payment of which definite provision had been made in Waddy Thompson's Convention of 1843. Calhoun protested also against the obnoxious decrees of 1843, to which due attention was given in the preceding sketch. He stated again that the United States held Texas to be totally independent, and that our treaty of annexation violated no prior engagement with Mexico.¹⁰⁶

When Calhoun wrote these instructions, he had not

heard of the militant order of the Mexican General Woll, which declared that hostilities were renewed against the inhabitants of Texas and that the armistice arranged on February 15 was at an end.

The suave language of the Mexican Foreign Secretaries, and the fact that Mexico was the weaker power, naturally lead to sympathy for that Republic. But one is constrained to the realization of the fact that Mexico was in some respects its own worst enemy. It would have been wise for the Mexican Government to make certain of the friendship of England and France, but Mexican excesses aroused the grievous wrath of the French minister,¹⁰⁷ and when Tomás Murphy reported the proposals made by Lord Aberdeen, of which an account was given above,¹⁰⁸ the effect upon Santa Anna was not to persuade him to accept the British terms, but to dispose him to use the information to extort money from the Mexican Congress. Bankhead persuaded him not to take this course, but Santa Anna let slip the golden opportunity for foreign assistance.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, Mexico injured its cause by its inability to maintain political stability. In the autumn of 1844 and the following winter the efforts of the Mexican Government to obtain money for the war with Texas failed of that purpose, but helped to accomplish the overthrow of Santa Anna, and in November General Paredes, who had been plotting for some time, revolted, and the army overthrew the executive Government. "Santa Anna marched upon the capital and Paredes marched upon Santa Anna."¹¹⁰ The Mexican Congress chose Herrera as President, and after vain efforts at resistance

Santa Anna, deserted by the army leaders, was arrested January 15, 1845. Later he was sent to the prison of Perote. He departed to Cuba and took up his residence in Havana. Thus, as the Tyler Administration reached its end, Herrera was the new President in Mexico.¹¹¹

The Mexican threats of war upon Texas led Calhoun not only to promise protection to Texas, but to take every possible precaution to prevent hostile action against that state. Information was received that the Mexican Government was fitting out two steam vessels of war in the port of New York, and steps were taken to enforce our laws of neutrality. In reply to an inquiry by Calhoun, Almonte very positively denied any illegal acts on the part of Mexico.¹¹² Calhoun drew up an instruction to Shannon, September 10, which is one of the severest documents found in his diplomatic writings. After reviewing the course of Mexico and its financial and military preparations, the Secretary asked: "Shall we stand by and witness in silence the renewal of the war by Mexico and its prosecution in this blood-thirsty and desolating spirit?" To this he gave a decided negative. Skilfully shifting from the use of the word "treaty," Calhoun said that the President would be compelled to regard the invasion of Texas by Mexico, while the *question* of annexation was pending, as highly offensive to the United States. Shannon was ordered to protest against the renewal of the war and the manner in which it was to be conducted, and to repeat his former declaration that annexation was adopted in no spirit of hostility to Mexico, and that if it were consummated, the United States would adjust liberally

all questions growing out of it, including that of boundary. The bearing of this instruction to Mexico City was entrusted to one with whose name the story of Secretary Upshur's administration has made us familiar—General Duff Green. Green was appointed to the consulship at Galveston, a very unimportant post.¹¹³ But it seems plain that this was more or less of a blind and that one important part of his mission was to go to Mexico City, bear to Shannon his dispatches, give counsel to Shannon and make independent reports to Calhoun. At least this is what resulted.¹¹⁴ By October 12, after spending a few days in Texas, he had reached Mexico, and both he and Shannon reported within the next few weeks concerning the last phases of Santa Anna's tenure of power. Shannon engaged in a violent correspondence with Rejon, which was published in Mexico to stir up national feeling against the United States, but even this did not serve to wring from the Mexican Congress a loan of \$10,000,000 for the war with Texas, which was asked on the ground that a former extraordinary tax would not be sufficient.¹¹⁵ Both Green and Shannon thought that the United States had nothing to hope from Mexico. The Mexicans could not recover Texas and they would not sell it. Santa Anna's Government was thoroughly corrupt. There was a scheme backed by the British consul in Mexico, said Green, to foreclose a mortgage which Mexican bond holders held on California.¹¹⁶ Santa Anna did not want war with the United States, but wanted relations to be such that he might have a pretense for keeping up an army. Green thought that the Mexicans had so long bullied, insulted and plundered us that they had lost all respect for us as a

nation, though they feared us as a people. Only war would bring Mexico to its senses.¹¹⁷

The course which Shannon later pursued was displeasing to our Government, and Tyler intended to ask for his resignation, but Calhoun's illness prevented.¹¹⁸

CHAPTER VIII

TEXAS, THE LAST PHASE

WE are now prepared to describe the last phase of Tyler's Texas negotiation. After the strenuous efforts of the summer, Calhoun had gone to South Carolina for a rest. The projected special session of Congress was not called.¹¹⁹ On his return he doubtless found encouragement in the fact that neither Mexican threats nor the diplomacy of Great Britain had yet brought about any definite action by Texas to defeat annexation. In his annual message, sent to Congress December 3, 1844, Tyler reported that Mexico was making formidable preparation to invade Texas, repeated the offer made so often before to settle with Mexico the question of the Texan boundary upon just and reasonable terms, and recommended the passage of a joint resolution or act to bring about annexation, stressing the fact that the election of Polk on the platform of annexation showed that the people vindicated his course. He sent in further papers December 18 and pressed the national benefits of annexation.¹²⁰

The effect of the election upon members of Congress was soon evident. After much political jockeying, a joint resolution was passed which Tyler signed March 1, 1845.¹²¹ This authorized the President to present to Texas one of two plans. The first plan, embodied in sections 1 and 2 of the resolution, looked to immediate annexation, differing from the treaty of 1844 in that Texas,

if that Republic should accept the offer, would come in as a state and not as a territory, and would retain both its debt and its public lands. It was provided that four additional states might be formed out of Texas, with the consent of that state. The terms of the Missouri Compromise, with the same dividing line of $36^{\circ} 30'$, were extended to the new acquisition. All questions of boundary that might arise with other governments were to be adjusted by the United States. The second plan, that of negotiation, was found in the third section of the joint resolution. A state formed out of the present Republic was to be admitted as soon as the conditions were agreed upon by the two governments, and these terms were to be embodied either in a treaty to be submitted to the Senate, or in a bill to be presented to Congress, as the President might direct.¹²² For this negotiation, the sum of \$100,000 was appropriated.

At this point Calhoun undertook to press Tyler to act himself and not leave the matter to his successor. Calhoun's position was supported by the Cabinet, and the President and the Secretary were agreed that the plan of the first two sections was the one to follow.¹²³ It was thought proper to consult Polk, and Calhoun called upon the President-elect, but Polk declined to express an opinion.¹²⁴ Therefore, with prompt action, instructions were sent off to Donelson, March 3, in which Calhoun explained the difficulties that would have resulted from the plan of further negotiation and the preference of the President for the simple resolution of annexation. The President desired the matter to be settled, but if this was impossible, he invited Texas

to frame a proposition of its own. He gave warning as to the dangers of foreign interference.¹²⁵

While the change of administration at Washington might properly bring to a halt at this point our narrative of the efforts to ensure the annexation of Texas, it seems better for the sake of continuity to push this topic to its completion, advancing for the purpose into the first few months of the Administration of Polk. Although when consulted by Calhoun he had refused to express any opinion, now, on March 7, before Calhoun had turned over the office to Buchanan, Polk wrote a private letter to Donelson, in which he told him not to act on Calhoun's orders until he received further instructions. When Buchanan entered upon his duties as Secretary and the Cabinet met, all present agreed in preferring the same method as that which Tyler had adopted. It was realized that to enter into another negotiation would invite complications, both as to Mexico and as to the European powers, to say nothing of domestic difficulties, and Buchanan directed Donelson, March 10, 1845, to present the first two sections to the Government of Texas.¹²⁶

At the time when Calhoun's instructions were sent off, Donelson was not in Texas but at New Orleans, where he was eagerly awaiting news as to the decision of Congress.

When Donelson, at the end of March, reached the Texan capital, he found little satisfaction in his conversations with President Jones, with Ashbel Smith, the Secretary of State of Texas, or with Allen, who succeeded Smith when the latter was given a leave of absence. Donelson heard that Houston intended to support

the third section of the American resolution, which Tyler and Polk had rejected. Although he endeavoured to stop this by presenting informally sections 1 and 2 as an ultimatum, he was obliged to say: "Affairs do not wear the encouraging aspect I would desire." A little later he visited Houston: and here, perhaps, Donelson determined the annexation of Texas, for he brought to bear on Jackson's old friend not merely the most cogent arguments for annexation, but the pressure of General Jackson's earnest personal plea. At the moment, however, Donelson was discouraged and could not see that he had produced much effect.¹²⁷

The particular point was whether Donelson could bring the existing Government of Texas to act in pursuance of the joint resolution—that is, to accept the terms and summon a convention. Donelson brought the pressure of the public opinion of Texas to bear on the Government in every possible way, and on April 15, Jones issued a proclamation calling on the Texan Congress to assemble June 16. By the first part of May, Donelson felt that Houston's views had changed for the better. On May 5, Jones took another step, which was entirely extra-constitutional with reference to the existing constitution of Texas. He issued a proclamation recommending that delegates be chosen to meet at Austin on the 4th of July to consider the overture of the United States "and any other proposition that might be presented concerning the nationality of the republic." The convention was also, if it thought wise, to draw up a new constitution, which should be submitted for popular ratification, with a view to the admission of Texas into the American Union.¹²⁸

When this action of May 5 had been taken, Donelson could feel some degree of satisfaction. It was true that either the Texan Congress or the convention, or both, might give trouble, but he had won the first round of forcing action from the executive part of the Texan Government, of whose capacity for obstruction he had no little fear. In winning this victory he had been stoutly supported by A. Yell, formerly Governor of Arkansas and a close friend of President Polk; by C. A. Wickliffe, formerly Postmaster-General in the Administration of Tyler, whom Polk had commissioned as a special agent to oppose the suspected designs of England and France; and by the commander of the American naval vessels, Stockton, who, with much energy and with not so much discretion, was in danger of making Jones indignant and driving him into a definitely hostile attitude. Duff Green was no longer in Texas, but in Washington, D. C., where he was informing Polk concerning the mortgage which he believed England had upon California.¹²⁹ In view of the possible danger of a military attack from Mexico, Buchanan informed Donelson, May 23, 1845, that as soon as the existing Government and the Convention of Texas should have accepted the terms of the joint resolution, the President would employ the army of the United States to defend Texas, and would place on the border an army of 3,000 men.¹³⁰ Towards the end of May there was grave danger that a clash would be provoked by the efforts of some of the Texans. Wickliffe and Stockton, supporting ex-President Lamar and a faction hostile to Jones, thought of forcing Jones into hostilities, and Sherman, the Commander-in-Chief of the Texan army, gave his support to this movement.

Donelson, however, was successful in keeping the Government of the United States from being implicated in this dangerous undertaking.¹³¹

We come thus to the second phase of this matter—the last efforts of England and France to interfere.

During all this time, the British chargé had been missing from his post. He had left Texas shortly after Donelson's arrival, giving out that he was leaving on a journey for Charleston, South Carolina. This was entirely untrue, and to understand what he really was doing we must go back and take up once more the threads of Lord Aberdeen's "tortuous"¹³² diplomacy: remembering always that what is now open to us lay hidden from the knowledge of his contemporaries.

In a preceding chapter it was remarked that Santa Anna's halting acquiescence, in the autumn of 1844, in the plan proposed by Lord Aberdeen had been reached too late to fall in with the ideas of the British Government.¹³³ Now, in the early months of 1845, when Herrera was President of Mexico, Cuevas, at this time the Secretary of Foreign Relations, having observed the result of the election in the United States and the course of the annexation measures in the American Congress, had come to see the necessity of facing the realities of the situation. After much delay, Bankhead, the British minister in Mexico, was able to forward to Elliot, the British chargé in Texas, on March 20, 1845, the statement that Mexico was disposed to receive overtures from Texas with a view to recognition.¹³⁴ Before this news reached Elliot, he had received, on March 24, from Lord Aberdeen, new instructions which bore date of January 23, 1844. To these we must now devote some

attention, remarking, parenthetically, that the French chargé in Texas, Saligny, had received similar instructions, and like Elliot had returned to the capital of Texas, whither both arrived before the American chargé.

Lord Aberdeen's instructions of January 23 marked the commencement of another forward movement to prevent annexation, in sharp contrast with the quiescence which had characterized Aberdeen's policy at the end of the year 1844. Aberdeen was influenced, no doubt, by several considerations—the news from Mexico of Santa Anna's tardy acceptance of the earlier British suggestions; the report from France that Guizot was ready to go the whole length which Great Britain proposed for the establishment of the independence of Texas; and, above all, the enthusiastic hostility to annexation manifested by G. W. Terrell, who had succeeded Ashbel Smith as the chargé of Texas in London.¹³⁵ Aberdeen now instructed Elliot to urge upon Texas the acceptance of the offer which Santa Anna, through British influence, had made. There was a bare suggestion that this offer might be modified so as to be more acceptable to Texas. Aberdeen stated that Calhoun's assertion as to a disagreement between Great Britain and France was untrue, and in proof enclosed instructions from Guizot to Saligny very similar to his own.¹³⁶

Though now opposed to the mention of securities and guaranties on the part of the European Powers, because of the flame which this would light up in the United States, Elliot thought that, if Mexico would only acknowledge the independence of Texas, the question might be speedily and securely adjusted in a

manner favourable to England. Therefore, after a long conference with Ashbel Smith and with President Jones, Elliot and Saligny formally offered the good offices of England and France to secure an honourable settlement with Mexico, and on March 29, Jones accepted a memorandum which had been drawn up to embody the proposals of Texas. Certain preliminary conditions were to be submitted to Mexico. First, Mexico should consent to acknowledge the independence of Texas. Secondly, Texas promised that it would stipulate in the treaty which was to be made that it would not annex itself to any country. Thirdly, the boundaries should be arranged in the final treaty. Fourthly, disputes as to territory and other points should be referred to the arbitration of umpires. If these preliminary proposals were accepted by Mexico, a proclamation should be issued announcing the conclusion of the preliminaries of peace, and for a period of ninety days from the date of the memorandum Texas would agree not to accept any proposal, or treat with any country to annex itself thereto. Elliot agreed, unwillingly, to be sure, that he should himself go to Mexico City, and with the assistance of the British and French ministers there, endeavour to secure the immediate acceptance of the preliminary arrangement. Elliot, giving out that he was proceeding to Charleston, was transferred at sea to the British war vessel *Eurydice*, of which his cousin, George Elliot, was in command, and in this manner departed for Vera Cruz. Saligny also left Texas, for New York City.¹³⁷ A little later, Donelson, our chargé, leaving Texas for a visit to New Orleans, discovered, without delay, the subterfuge which Elliot had attempted.¹³⁸

Elliot reached Mexico in due course, the Mexican Cabinet considered the British and French offer, and after great delay an agreement was made in writing, May 19. Four days later, Elliot set out on his return to Texas.¹³⁹ His efforts to keep himself incognito failed. He reached Galveston May 30, hastened to see President Jones and delivered to him the documents brought from Mexico.

On June 4 the President of Texas issued another proclamation, declaring that all hostilities against Mexico should cease in the light of a new offer from Great Britain and France and the acceptance of this by the Government of Mexico. The effect of this proclamation upon the Texans—as reported cautiously by Donelson, and with more vehemence by Wickliffe—together with the threats which Elliot freely uttered as to Mexican hostilities if the American offer should be accepted, was to arouse public sentiment against Jones and give colour to the suspicion that he was planning to throw Texas into the arms of England. Donelson, however, was not led into a breach with Jones, for he saw that a revolution or disturbance of any sort would only delay annexation. To the Texan Congress, which met June 16, President Jones submitted the American proposition for annexation, and a little later he sent to the Senate the preliminary conditions of a treaty of peace with Mexico which should recognize the independence of Texas. The Texan Congress, following the guidance of Donelson, unanimously adopted the American resolution, June 18, and approved the calling of a convention for the same purpose, while the Senate with equal unanimity rejected the proposed treaty with Mexico.

The convention met July 4. The chief danger, that of a conditional acceptance of the American resolutions for annexation, was skilfully avoided through Donelson's care, and the convention, of which General Rusk was the president, on the second day adopted an ordinance for annexation.¹⁴⁰ Lord Aberdeen had lost the game.¹⁴¹

CHAPTER IX

OREGON AND CALIFORNIA

I

SECRETARY UPSHUR, after long delay, had set a date for a conference with Pakenham in regard to the matter of Oregon. Because of Upshur's tragic death and the urgency and importance of the matters which awaited Calhoun on his accession, it was not until July 22, 1844, that Pakenham brought to Calhoun's attention the earnest desire of the British Government that the question should be disposed of as soon as possible.¹⁴² In the interval, the rapid increase of popular excitement had constituted quite as serious a pressure as any that the British minister could exert. Here, again, diplomacy had to operate in the midst of politics, for the Northwest was as insistent for Oregon as the South for Texas. On June 3, 1844, the Senate had called for the correspondence with England, but Tyler had refused to send it.

Over and above the influence previously exerted by the reports and writings of such men as Nathaniel Wyeth, Hall J. Kelley, and W. A. Slacum, the activity of the missionaries and the news brought back by Frémont and other explorers, the summer of 1843 had brought about conventions and public meetings to promote the acquisition of Oregon. The Oregon settlers in May had begun the formation of a government,¹⁴³ and in Congress the needs of Oregon had led to speeches,

bills, and messages from the President. Tyler, in his message of December, 1843, had recommended the establishment along the line of travel to the Oregon country of military posts for the protection of the immigrants from the Indians, and had added a suggestion of legislation on behalf of the settlers.

Early in 1844, the recommendations in this message provoked a long debate in the Senate, when Semple, of Illinois, offered a resolution which was to require the President to give notice to Great Britain in accordance with the treaty of 1827 that joint occupation would be terminated.¹⁴⁴ Senator Atchison, of Missouri, urged, too, the establishment of a territorial government in the Oregon country.¹⁴⁵ These resolutions failed of adoption, though the House of Representatives passed a bill which looked to a similar end. The discussion brought from James Buchanan, then Senator from Pennsylvania, a speech in which he proclaimed his belief in the validity of the title of the United States to the whole of Oregon, and maintained that delay was to England's advantage. Until such notice should be given, he said, there would be no adjustment of the boundary question.¹⁴⁶ Tyler, replying to a resolution adopted by the Senate June 3, 1844, which had requested copies of any instructions to our minister, and of correspondence between our Government and that of Great Britain concerning Oregon, said that in the present state of the matter it was inexpedient to communicate this information.

The platform put forth by the Whig national convention was silent concerning Oregon as well as Texas. The Democratic party, on the contrary, took the extreme view held by the western members of Congress

and declared that our title to the whole of Oregon was clear and unquestionable, and that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power; and coupled the re-occupation of Oregon with the re-annexation of Texas as "great American measures" which the convention recommended to the support of the Democracy of the Union.

That Calhoun had long since thought of the political value of the combination of the Oregon and Texas issues was made clear by the letter cited in the introductory part of this paper, but the Secretary did not sympathize with the position of the extremists. He had not, however, expressed any such scorn of the disputed territory as had some of his fellow southerners. What he stood for particularly in the great speech which he had made on January 24, 1843, was a policy of "masterly inactivity."¹⁴⁷ Merely to let time pass was to win Oregon by populating it with Americans. Calhoun saw that, if pressed, Great Britain might fight, and that if it did, it still was in a vastly more favourable position to hold Oregon than the United States. Tyler was of the same mind as Calhoun, and later recalled how pressure from the West had forced him to act, while he preferred the policy of delay.¹⁴⁸

Calhoun waited exactly a month before accepting Pakenham's proposal to take up the negotiation concerning Oregon. The negotiation began with a conference held August 23, followed by five others in this month and in September. Then, after an interval, Pakenham said that while the papers remained under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, he was instructed to make an offer of arbitration. This, Calhoun,

on the part of the United States, declined, January 21, 1845.¹⁴⁹ It was understood on both sides that the negotiation was still in progress and not brought to an end. This was the view of Tyler, to whom the Senate had sent a resolution December 11, repeating the request formerly made for the instructions and correspondence concerning the Oregon question. The President answered, February 19, 1845, that the information could not be communicated without prejudice to the public service, as the negotiation was still pending. With some euphemism, however, he informed Congress that considerable progress had been made in the discussion and there was reason to hope that it might be closed within a short period. He had delayed his reply in the expectation that this would take place before the adjournment of Congress.

Pakenham, invited to reveal any British proposal, stated at the second conference with Calhoun that what Aberdeen now had to offer over and above the former British proposal—that of the Columbia River boundary, with the free navigation of that river and with the concession to the United States of an “enclave” on the Olympic peninsula north of the river—was merely an undertaking “to make free to the United States any port or ports which the United States Government may desire, either on the mainland or on Vancouver’s Island south of latitude 49°,” instead of the single port which had been offered previously. This, Calhoun at once declined, and the two negotiators agreed that written statements should be prepared—a return to the earlier procedure of 1824 and 1826, in contrast with the plan of personal conferences adopted by Webster and Ash-

burton. When Calhoun undertook the preparation of his written statement of our claims, he had at his hand not merely the older documents, but also the very full instructions which Upshur, on October 9, 1843, had sent to Edward Everett.¹⁵⁰ Calhoun devoted his argument to proving our title to that portion of the territory in dispute which was drained by the waters of the Columbia River. It is incorrect to say that Calhoun made no attempt to claim any territory for the United States beyond the forty-ninth parallel; for in the exchange of papers, Calhoun first specifically reserved our claims to the "other portions of the territory," and then later made a brief general statement that our claims would derive from Spain by the Florida treaty and were founded on the discovery and exploration of Spanish navigators.¹⁵¹ Several months later, Calhoun said, in retrospect, that he had considered that Oregon and not Texas had all along been the dangerous question, and had acted accordingly. Again, in 1846, he said, reviewing the past, that he had believed that if we adhered to the Convention, the progress of events would ultimately give us possession of the whole territory.¹⁵² But, as we have just recounted, the course of political events forced Calhoun to take up the negotiation. Thus compelled, he stressed not our title to the whole of Oregon, but that to the basin of the Columbia, taking for granted the offers of compromise to which his predecessors had already been committed.

The discussion, therefore, went over much ground that was old, and developed comparatively little that was new. Calhoun denied the British interpretation of rights which that Government had acquired by the

Nootka Sound Convention, and stressed the rights we had acquired from Spain by the treaty of 1819. He advanced very strongly what we may call an argument of "continuity"—the extension westward of the title acquired from France by the purchase of Louisiana. When Pakenham minimized this, Calhoun argued by analogy from the clash of the British claims with the French on the Ohio, where France had unquestionably been the first to settle and explore, but where the westward movement of the British colonies in the end had won the region for England. To this, Calhoun added the force acquired by the westward movement of population into Oregon, but Pakenham naturally declined to see in this the establishment of any legal title to the territory.¹⁵³

In the course of time what was hidden from Tyler and Calhoun has been rendered accessible through the opening of the British archives and the private papers of the Earl of Aberdeen. Pakenham, we find, carried out diligently the instructions which he had received; but a very careful student of the Oregon question has discovered in Lord Aberdeen's papers the proof that Aberdeen himself did not expect the American Government to accept the terms offered. On March 4, 1844, Aberdeen had suggested to Pakenham that, without committing himself or his Government, he should draw from the American negotiators a proposal to make the forty-ninth degree of latitude the boundary, with the proviso that the ports south of that parallel to the Columbia River should be free ports, that the navigation of the Columbia River should be common to both countries, and that the forty-ninth degree of latitude as

a boundary should extend only to the sea, leaving Vancouver Island to Great Britain. If this proposal should come from the American Government, Aberdeen said, it might be favourably considered by the British Cabinet, although he was not sure it would be accepted. This was in March, 1844. When, in August, Pakenham had finally taken up the formal discussion with Calhoun, he reported the latter as saying that it would be idle to propose to the Senate any less advantageous boundary than the forty-ninth parallel, because it would most certainly not be ratified.¹⁵⁴ Clearly, then, there was a certain unreality about all the later British arguments.

Although the decision to carry on negotiations through Pakenham at Washington had left our minister to Great Britain, Edward Everett, without any official power in the matter, he devoted, with a persistence which should not be overlooked, his energy and his great ability to a sincere effort to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Oregon question. Indeed, at times he was so active that if he had made a false step he might have been subject to censure. It was he, we should remember, who pressed as a compromise what did in fact become the territorial boundary of the treaty of 1846—the extension along the forty-ninth parallel to the Pacific, but with Vancouver Island left to Great Britain.¹⁵⁵

Although no agreement had been reached, and arbitration had been declined, nothing had yet happened in the Calhoun-Pakenham negotiations to render impossible a solution of the Oregon difficulty. Here we leave the matter, to be resumed in connection with the Secretaryship of James Buchanan.

II

California, by the time that Calhoun became Secretary of State, had emerged from its previous obscurity to take an important place in the mind of the American people; though this was still secondary to that occupied by either Oregon or Texas. California had been the goal of fur traders from St. Louis and of traffickers in hides and tallow from New England; and there had been an increasing infiltration of foreigners from many quarters of the globe—of whom John A. Sutter may be taken as an interesting example. Many American emigrants, too, were in California before 1843; and by 1845 there were about eight hundred American residents out of a total white population of about ten thousand. The internal disorder in independent Mexico had been too severe to permit any but irregular and apathetic support to the colonizing work begun by the Spanish viceroyalty and to the missionary endeavour which it had sheltered in that distant province; moreover the temperament of these farthest Mexican frontiersmen ran true to type, and revolutions and discords characterized California itself. The people from Monterey northward were ill disposed towards those of San Diego: and in these dissensions and in the disputes with the authorities of Mexico the foreigners, including the Americans, inevitably took part.

In November, 1844, the incapacity of the governor, Micheltorena, and the obnoxious character of his weak garrison led to a revolt headed by the former rivals Castro and Alvarado. At Los Angeles the authorities under the influence of Castro issued a proclamation

deposing Micheltorena and appointing in his place one Pío Pico as governor. On the banks of the Los Angeles River, on February 20, 1845, what has been called a battle was fought, and as a result of this and another skirmish Micheltorena gave up the fight and shortly after departed from California for Mexico. This eliminated for the time being governmental relations with Mexico but it did not solve at all the relations of the foreigners, including the Americans, to the native Californians, nor even the difficulties between the native Californians themselves.¹⁵⁶ The consideration of this troublesome problem and of the events by which it was solved belongs to the next chapter, but it is necessary first to consider the international questions raised by the existence of this rich and loosely attached territory of Mexico.

Calhoun had been Secretary but a few weeks when young B. E. Green, our chargé in Mexico City, sent him an abstract of what he had gleaned concerning California from a Mr. Hastings, who two years since had led a party of immigrants to Oregon, and had passed through Mexico City about three months before, on his return to the United States. Oregon was valuable, Green wrote, chiefly because of its fisheries and fur trade. It was important in an agricultural view, but less so than the adjoining California. Hastings had told Green in confidence that California was on the point of following the example of Texas and declaring its independence. The whole project had been well digested and reduced to a systematized plan. The power was in the hands of the foreigners, and the natives were in their favour. A "German" named "Sutor" was at the head and their

beginning was only waiting for the return of Hastings with more immigrants. Hastings also brought word that the Oregon settlers already had a government and laws and were debating the matter of claiming their independence from the United States and forming an independent country on the coast in conjunction with the Californias. There was also the possibility that Sonora would join with California. New Mexico and even Tamaulipas would not be averse to a union with Texas. In the light, Green said, of Santa Anna's provocation of France, if France should refuse to be pacified, the French minister, if he advised well, would advise that the attack should be made through Texas and upon the discontented provinces. "It is by no means improbable," Green added, "that the result will be the annexation of those departments to Texas." With the addition of these Texas would not desire annexation to the United States, but on the contrary would prove a dangerous rival both to the cotton states of the South and the manufacturers of the North.¹⁵⁷ Only a few weeks later Hastings himself wrote to Calhoun, from New Madrid, in Missouri, to say that if in Calhoun's opinion the information possessed by him concerning the revolutionary arrangements which were being made would be of any importance to the Government of the United States, he would feel in duty bound to inform him in reference to everything pertaining thereto.¹⁵⁸

If Hastings was typical of the hundreds of emigrants from the United States that were pouring into California in 1843 and 1844, another source of information concerning the Pacific coast was to be found in the re-

ports of the United States Exploring Expedition under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, and also in the accounts of the first and second expeditions of John C. Frémont. But so far as diplomatic matters were concerned, California, of course, came into the horizon of the State Department rather through Mexico, and our interest was stimulated all the more through the rumoured designs of Great Britain. A United States consulate at Monterey was formally opened April 2, 1844, and the consul, Thomas O. Larkin, proved to be a vigorous and prolific writer. He reported the good relations that existed between the American immigrants and the natives; wondered at the establishment of a French consul in California, and watched with jealousy the course of the Hudson's Bay Company.¹⁵⁹ He received from the State Department the approving comment that his information was of an important and interesting character, and he was urged to keep the Department advised touching the political condition of the west coast.¹⁶⁰

Calhoun later expressed the opinion that if let alone he could have brought the Oregon negotiations to a successful conclusion.¹⁶¹ This seems highly probable except for the consideration of the rising popular demand for all of Oregon and the probability that those politically opposed to Calhoun would have attacked from sectional animosity any compromise which he might have made. As to both Oregon and California it is clear that he had a full grasp of the importance of the Pacific coast and like so many others of his time stressed the significance of the trade with the Orient which would come to or through the United States.¹⁶² William M.

Gwin, one of the first senators from California, recalled years afterwards that it was Calhoun who had interested him in California and had prophesied that San Francisco would be to the Pacific coast what New York was to the Atlantic.¹⁶³

CHAPTER X

THE INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING INTEREST

IN one of the early chapters of this sketch, it was shown that the importance which the South attached to the place of the great interest of slavery in our foreign relations extended far beyond the mere question of Texas: and that the southern leaders, at the time when the greatest of them became Secretary of State, were alarmed and apprehensive with respect to the supposed designs of Great Britain. In the present chapter it is our task to continue this theme, and to look into the larger problem of the Department of State, that of combating those activities or principles of British diplomacy, in other matters than that of Texas, which the planting interest considered to be dangerous to its own welfare. Let us consider first the friction that arose in connection with the obligation of the United States to enforce the suppression of the African slave trade.

I

By the eighth article of the Webster-Ashburton treaty the United States had agreed with Great Britain that each power should maintain adequate squadrons on the coast of Africa for the suppression of the slave trade. Though each was to be independent of the other,

the respective governments should give such orders to the commanding officers as would facilitate co-operation for the common object. In the Senate this provision had been much attacked, particularly by Benton, but Calhoun had supported it as the only alternative to the worse course of yielding to the right of search or visitation.¹⁶⁴

Before the negotiation of Webster and Ashburton, it will be recalled, the exercise of this right by Great Britain, though intended as a police measure, had aroused bitter resentment in this country, and particularly in the South. Under instructions from Webster and Upshur, Edward Everett pressed, no doubt greatly to his own dislike, the cases of American vessels which had been detained upon the coast of Africa by British cruisers; and in December 1843, President Tyler had expressed to Congress his satisfaction at the prospect that all the older cases of this sort would be adjusted. But the operations of the two squadrons under the eighth article of the treaty offered the possibility of new difficulties, and there was much correspondence over the orders issued or to be issued by the Navy Departments of England and the United States to the officers of their respective squadrons, and over the propriety of making such instructions public.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, further cases of the stopping of American vessels by the British cruisers soon began to be reported. But the American complaints against the activity of the British cruisers were offset by the unwelcome evidence that the participation of American vessels in the slave trade still continued despite our efforts. On March 9, 1844,¹⁶⁶ only a few days after Upshur's death and before Calhoun

had reached Washington, the President sent to the Senate, upon a call by that body, a note which our minister, Edward Everett, had received from Lord Aberdeen. In this note, which was written November 22, 1843, the British Secretary charged that facilities were being afforded the trade in slaves by the practices of vessels which bore the United States flag. Unfortunately, these charges received ample substantiation from the dispatches which G. W. Slacum, our consul at Rio de Janeiro, had sent home some time before.¹⁶⁷

We are thus brought to the consideration of one of the most interesting, as well as one of the least known of the diplomatic activities of Tyler, Upshur and Calhoun. This was the sending to Brazil, as minister, of that able representative of southern plantation interests, Henry A. Wise, of Virginia. Wise was nominated January 18, 1844, and on February 9 the nomination was confirmed.¹⁶⁸ This, of course, was before Calhoun became Secretary. But a long delay took place in the departure of Wise for his post. In part this was due to the necessity of arranging transportation, but it seems more than likely that a more important reason was the desire to have Wise fully informed as to the plans of the Administration and the new Secretary.

Calhoun's general instructions to Wise were dated May 25, 1844, and were hurried to him just in time for his sailing. Calhoun approved the instructions which Upshur had given to G. H. Proffit, the predecessor of Wise, and stressed the importance of Brazil, next to the United States the most wealthy and firmly established of all American powers. The Secretary bade Wise to explain to the Government of Brazil that in undertaking

the annexation of Texas the United States had no hostile feeling towards Mexico, and to make clear to Brazil the policy of Great Britain, especially with reference to the abolition of slavery. It was the policy of the United States that there should be no interference in internal matters. Wise was to stress the interest of both Brazil and the United States in the proper relations of the white and black races, and the danger to these relations of British interference. He was to inform the Government of that country of the satisfaction felt by the Government of the United States with the firm resistance which Brazil had made against the attempt of Great Britain in the late negotiations to make the abolition of slavery in Brazil a condition on which its sugar should be admitted into the British market on equality with that produced in the colonies of Great Britain.

With regard to the ninth article of the Webster-Ashburton treaty, which pledged each of the signatory powers to remonstrate with countries which permitted the continuance of a market for slaves, Calhoun gave Wise no specific instructions: but there was a general approval of the instructions which had been given to Proffit, and these had included directions to proceed with caution in this matter.¹⁶⁹

The dispatches which Wise had sent from Brazil formed the basis for an extended message, which, on February 20, 1845, only a few days before the close of the Tyler Administration, the President sent to Congress. American citizens, said the President, were participating in a regular system of evading the law with regard to the trade in slaves.

By fraudulent methods American vessels were sold, to be delivered on the coast of Africa. First clearing from the United States for some port in Great Britain, where goods designed especially for the African trade were purchased, such vessels proceeded from Great Britain to Brazil, there received a new crew, and departed for the coast of Africa, where the transfer of the vessel was made, the merchandise was exchanged for slaves, the American crew discharged and a new passenger crew put in to carry back the miserable freight to the first contrivers of the voyage, in Brazil. It was quite possible, said the President, that the Americans originally enlisted or the passenger crew put on board in Brazil might be unaware of the nature of the voyage, yet on these fell the penalties of the law, while the guilty contrivers escaped.

While recognizing the need of further legislation to clear the United States of this disgrace, the President proceeded to indict the policy of Great Britain. His first charge was that British subjects were deeply in the trap, in that they supplied the goods used in the nefarious traffic. Secondly, the President attacked the policy of Great Britain in regard to the Africans captured from the slave ships. Such liberated slaves, instead of being sent back to their homes, were transferred to the British possessions in the West Indies, under apprenticeship for a term of years, while the officers and crews of the capturing vessel received a bounty of so many pounds per capita on the whole number of slaves. The result was a continuance of another slave trade in a more cruel form. Very sarcastically, Tyler expressed the hope that Great Britain would "adopt more efficient measures for the

suppression of the trade which she has so long attempted to put down, with, as yet, so little success, and more consonant with the original policy of restoring the captured African to his home."

Of the effect produced in England by the President's statements and by the communications which Wise addressed to the British minister in Brazil, we shall have more to say in the following sketch: to which time we must defer, also, the revival of complaint against England, in cases like that of the *Cyrus*, on account of the searching of American vessels. But Calhoun took up many other phases of controversy which had to do with slavery, and some of these must be mentioned before we close this chapter.

II

The most important expression made by Calhoun of his views concerning Great Britain and slavery was developed in his instructions to W. R. King, dated August 12, 1844, to which reference was made above, in our discussion of the attempted interference of Great Britain and France in Texas. Calhoun derived his statistical material largely from an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June 1844, and his method of handling his argument caused the London *Times* to call his dispatch a magazine article. Calhoun stressed particularly that it was to England's interest to abolish slavery in the United States, Cuba, and Brazil in order to destroy competition of those countries with the more expensive production in the British possessions. He did not limit his view to America and Africa, but alluded to Great

Britain's possessions beyond the Cape of Good Hope, where an unlimited amount of labour stood ready by the aid of British capital to supply, under monopolistic control, the tropical products in question. Calhoun referred also to Great Britain's intention, "even to restore, substantially, the slave trade itself, under the specious name of transporting free labourers from Africa to her West India possessions, in order, if possible, to compete successfully with those who have refused to follow her suicidal policy."¹⁷⁰ This, it will be seen, is the same line of reasoning as that expressed in his letters of 1843 which we brought to the reader's attention earlier in this sketch. As we might imagine, Calhoun's dispatch of August 12 attracted much attention abroad and aroused no little resentment. How Lord Aberdeen, answering criticisms of Wise, replied indirectly to Tyler and Calhoun will appear in the succeeding sketch, but we may well mention here one or two of the comments made, very shortly after the writing of this dispatch, in the British Parliament. R. H. Inglis, for example, delivered in the House of Commons, February 25, 1845, a speech on the subject of the treatment of liberated Africans. It appeared that up to 1844 it had been provided by an order-in-council that when landed in any place where there was a court of Mixed Commission, the slaves should be protected and provided for. In June 1844, however, the Governor of Sierra Leone had issued a proclamation in which he announced that whatever allowances had been made to captured Negroes would be discontinued, except clothing and maintenance while under adjudication, in case the Negro elected to remain in Sierra Leone rather than migrate to the West Indies.

This Inglis attacked as a perfect mockery of justice, and denied the right of the Government to make the Negroes choose between starvation in Sierra Leone or becoming forced labourers in the West Indies. Inglis declared that he resented the statements made in foreign countries that this was only slavery in disguise. He thought that both France and Spain viewed with jealousy this immigration to the British colonies, as well as the British discriminations against slave-grown sugar. "It was hardly necessary," Inglis continued, "to do more than refer to the use made of our conduct in these matters by Mr. Calhoun, in his celebrated letter to Mr. King."¹⁷¹ A long discussion followed, the reading of which shows that the problems of furnishing the West Indies with labour without inconsistency with British philanthropy was a difficult one. To Calhoun's letter a Mr. Miles had referred also the day before, February 24, in a discussion of the admission of coolies.¹⁷² But the most striking pronouncement on the subject came February 26 from Macaulay, who, speaking on the question of the amendment of the sugar duties, denied the existence of any moral obligation to turn the British fiscal code into a penal code for the purpose of correcting vices in the institutions of independent states, but attacked the United States as worse than Brazil through the obstructions which our Government had placed in the way of the maritime police by which Great Britain had attempted to drive slave-trading vessels from the great highway of nations. Not only had the United States refused to accept the right of search, but we had tried to induce other nations to imitate our example. "You know as well as I do," said Macaulay, "that, if the

United States had submitted to the Right of Search, there would have been no outcry against that right in France." But now he foresaw that Spain would follow France in opposing the right of search. He thanked the late President of the Board of Trade for reminding him of Mr. Calhoun's letter, and denounced the United States for formally declaring itself "the patron, the champion of negro slavery all over the world—the evil genius, the Arimanes of the African race"; and criticized us for snatching provinces on the right hand and on the left from neighbouring countries which had free institutions, for the purpose of diffusing over a wider space the greatest curse that afflicted humanity.¹⁷³

That this was a fair statement of Calhoun's policy, no one today would claim: but it affords ample proof that Calhoun's letter to King had been read in Great Britain.

III

As was to be expected, Calhoun, as Senator, had been the protagonist on the side of the southern states in pressing for a proper settlement of the cases of American vessels with slaves on board driven by accident or violence into British colonial ports. With reference to the correspondence between Webster and Lord Ashburton concerning the *Creole*, Calhoun said he would have preferred to have a specific promise in the treaty, but he considered that Ashburton's letter to Webster constituted a definite pledge that the laws and duties of hospitality should be executed.¹⁷⁴ When the question as to the future handling of such cases was presented by Everett to Lord Aberdeen at the behest of

Upshur, Aberdeen's reply was unsatisfactory, and Calhoun, writing August 12 to Everett, argued at great length that vessels in the coasting trade of the United States having slaves on board, carried into British waters by weather or revolt of the Negroes, remained under the jurisdiction of the United States, and that the duties of good neighbourhood required that each country should so regulate its own affairs as not to interfere with the rights and commerce of the other. Aberdeen declined to reveal the instructions sent to the colonial governors on this point. Everett, obviously trying to soften the effect of this refusal, suggested that the reason might be that these instructions, though short of our demands, might, on the other hand, fail to satisfy the abolitionist element in Great Britain.¹⁷⁵

Another long instruction sent by Calhoun to Everett gives a similar impression that Calhoun was trying to force Aberdeen into a correspondence upon slavery. This concerned the extradition, under the tenth article of the Webster-Ashburton treaty, of certain Negro slaves, charged with a murder in Florida, who had fled to Nassau. The special point involved was the sufficiency of the indictment. Everett's acceptance of Lord Aberdeen's answers was so easy-going that Calhoun, in a letter to Everett, flatly spoke of Everett's reply as "very unsatisfactory." But the question of the form of indictment was raised in other cases and was drawn away from the slavery issue.¹⁷⁶

Calhoun's intense desire to hold Great Britain to account on the subject of interference with slavery in the United States appeared also in connection with two

minor matters. Parliament had passed an Act for the more effectual suppression of the slave trade, which extended the criminal jurisdiction of Great Britain to its subjects in foreign countries in all cases embraced within the Act. This aroused no little discussion. Everett, upon instruction from Calhoun, asked an explanation from the British Government and was told by Lord Aberdeen that the Act was considered to be enforceable only within the British dominions. Resentment was excited also by a circular sent out May 30, 1843, from the Foreign Office to British consuls in countries "not parties to treaties or conventions, giving a mutual right of search of vessels suspected of the slave trade." In the circular, printed in 1844, were found detailed questions which the consuls were to answer concerning the slave population of the country to which they were accredited, the progress of manumission and the difference in the treatment of free white and free coloured men. In distant Brazil, Henry Wise came upon a copy of this circular, and made it the subject of a complaint to Calhoun, which bore date of January 12, 1845:

"Ought it [such an inquiry] to be suffered at a time when insurrection and massacre are set on foot in the neighboring Island of Cuba by a British Consul? If it were known at Norfolk, at Charleston, at Savannah, or Mobile or New Orleans, that British Consuls there were spies upon the very privacy of our families and reporting the condition of our domestic and private relations daily to the British Government, would it not bring down the just indignation of

our best citizens upon these British authorities, expel them by force from among us, and endanger at once our peace with Great Britain?"

Calhoun, in his letter to Everett, showed no excitement whatever. Everett replied that even before he received the copy of the circular, Aberdeen had said that the inquiries were made with no specific object, but in conformity with the practice of the British Government of collecting, through their Consuls or special agents, statistical information upon all subjects of great public interest. But Everett himself thought that the issuing of the circular was contrary to the rule which Aberdeen had laid down in his dispatch to Pakenham of December 26, 1843, in which Aberdeen said the British Government had never in its treatment of the United States made any difference between the slave-holding and the free states of the Union. Everett pointed out the minute character of the queries in the circular in regard to subjects over which Great Britain had no right of interference and thought that the great principle of non-intervention had been supported by England in Europe to good effect.¹⁷⁷

CHAPTER XI

SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

I

EXCEPTING the mission of Wise to Brazil, the most important matter in South American affairs was that which had to do with the interference of England and France in the relations of the Argentine Republic and Uruguay. The countries involved were primarily the Argentine Confederation under the dictatorship of Rosas and "the Oriental Republic" of Uruguay with its capital at Montevideo, while in proximity to Uruguay and the province of Buenos Aires, in the region between the Uruguay and the Paraná Rivers, stretched another province of the Argentine Confederation, called Entre Rios; and further to the north another province called Corrientes. North of this, across the Paraná, was the country of Paraguay, struggling for recognition of its independence. Northeast of Uruguay began the Dominion of Brazil. Uruguay was torn by a war between rival factions, one of which received support from the Argentine dictator, Rosas, while the other furnished aid and comfort to his enemies. Into the details of this tangled web it is impossible to enter here.

In the same year in which it had undertaken the disciplining of Mexico, France had established a peaceful blockade of Buenos Aires, but in 1840 a settlement had been reached. The tyranny of Rosas in the Argentine continued to develop, and the war between the Argentine and Uruguay went on unchecked.

In September, 1844, Captain Voorhees, in command of the United States frigate *Congress*, was off Montevideo, which port was then loosely blockaded by a squadron of the Argentine Confederation. When a vessel sent out by General Oribe, the head of one of the Uruguayan factions, supported by the Argentine Government, fired at an American barge, Captain Voorhees captured first the offending vessel, and later the whole Argentine squadron.¹⁷⁸ This aroused instant protest, and Calhoun at once disavowed Voorhees's action.¹⁷⁹ In January, 1845, Rosas undertook to enforce vigorously the blockade of the ports of Uruguay, particularly Montevideo, which led to difficulties with both European powers and the United States. The story of French and British interference belongs rather to the Polk Administration. Here it is necessary only to note the appointment, in September 1843, during Upshur's Secretaryship, of Harvey M. Watterson, of Tennessee, as special agent to obtain information as to the foreign relations of the Argentine, commercial matters, and the war with Uruguay.¹⁸⁰ In February 1844, Watterson was nominated chargé, but the Senate rejected the nomination, June 5, 1844,¹⁸¹ and a few days later, William Brent, Jr., of Virginia, was nominated to the vacant mission.¹⁸² Of Brent's actions we shall hear in the story of Buchanan's Secretaryship.

II

The mission of Henry A. Wise to Brazil was discussed above with especial reference to the slave trade; but it had other interesting phases. Some time after Wise had

reached the Court of Brazil, he presented to the Government, in accordance with his instructions, a statement of the policy of the United States, which is one of the longest and most thorough presentations of the ideas of Calhoun and the extreme southerners who followed him. Wise's address had the effect, however, of eliciting at once from França, the Brazilian Foreign Secretary, an inquiry as to what the United States would do in conjunction with Brazil to protect American interests, and the policy in general to prevent the intervention of Europe in American affairs. Wise replied that he had received no instructions, but in general terms gave an affirmative answer. He recalled the American policy of refraining from entangling alliances, lectured França on the bondage which arose from external debts, and declared that American states should favour each other in every respect. França immediately referred to the war existing between Montevideo and Buenos Aires, which injured every other nation and weakened themselves, too. He asked if the United States would unite with Brazil to stop this war, rather than leave England and France to do it. Wise replied that the United States would use its good offices, and that he would ask for further instructions. This dispatch reached the Department of State, January 2, 1845.¹⁸³ In the last instruction which Calhoun sent to Wise, he expressed regret that the pressure of business during the session of Congress had not allowed him sufficient time to examine as fully as he could wish, certain proposals which Wise had laid down as to a commercial reciprocity, and that it was necessary to defer the discussion of this for the consideration of the new administration, and, similarly, to postpone the

matter of the difficulties between Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The suggestion of Mr. França, Calhoun said, would have been taken immediately into consideration but for the reasons given. It is interesting to speculate what Calhoun would have said in reply to França's request for definite interference by the United States in South American affairs.¹⁸⁴

III

The countries which bordered on the Caribbean Sea, with their large Negro populations, furnished problems that presented many difficulties. We have already spoken of Cuba and the insurrections that were so severely repressed; and of the supposed activities of British agents, both in Cuba and in Jamaica. Some Americans were imprisoned, charged with complicity in the insurrections. Calhoun zealously sought for their release or a speedy trial.¹⁸⁵ In Santo Domingo the natives had declared their independence in February 1844, and had won a victory over the authorities of Haiti. The revolutionists sent to Washington as their representative Dr. J. M. Caminero, to seek the recognition of the United States, and President Tyler sent John Hogan to the island to report on the geography, the character of the population, military strength, proportion of the various races in the population, and the financial condition of the Government: but when Calhoun retired, the agent had not yet returned.¹⁸⁶

Almost at the time of Upshur's death, Everett had sent him a dispatch in which he described an interview with Mosquera, the minister of New Granada at Lon-

don, with reference to the effort of that Government to effect the construction of a ship canal through the Isthmus of Panama, and with reference to British encroachments on the rights of New Granada in the Isthmus.¹⁸⁷ In this we have a beginning of the diplomacy concerning the canal, which was to play such an important part later in the decade before the Civil War. The interest of the United States was very early aroused from the standpoint of postal arrangements, and, March 6, a postal convention was concluded by Blackford, our chargé at Bogotá, between New Granada and the United States, which, however, was inoperative, as ratifications were never exchanged. In 1843, Congress had made a small appropriation to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of State for the passage of mails between Chagres and Panama, and inquiries were made by our representative as to the establishment of a post. All this was made clear by Calhoun in response to an inquiry by Pakenham in April 1844, as to the terms upon which the United States Government was permitted to send its correspondence across the Isthmus.¹⁸⁸ On December 20, 1844, a treaty of peace, friendship, and commerce was signed with New Granada, but like the other, this was not brought to completion. Blackford, in 1843, had written to Upshur concerning the activities in Colombia, to which Everett had made reference, and later came to the United States on leave, when he was superseded by the Polk Administration.¹⁸⁹

CHAPTER XII

MISCELLANEOUS DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS

THERE remain to be considered several minor matters too important to be entirely omitted and yet not such as to demand an extended treatment. These we shall endeavour to throw together in this chapter, considering, first, China and the Pacific; secondly, Henry Wheaton's treaty of reciprocity with the Zollverein; thirdly, minor questions with France, Prussia, and Denmark; and lastly, some further matters discussed with the British Government.

I

When Calhoun entered upon office there was in progress the celebrated mission to China which had been arranged for when Webster was Secretary of State and for which Caleb Cushing had been appointed commissioner. Calhoun was the recipient of the many dispatches in which Cushing reported the progress of his mission and of the Treaty of Wanghia, which Cushing had signed July 3, 1843, with Kiyong, the Imperial Commissioner and the Governor-General of Kwang-Tung and Kwangsi. As a result of the Anglo-Chinese War and the Treaties of Nanking (1842) and the Bogue (1843), China had been forced to yield to England, besides an indemnity of \$21,000,000, the cession of

Hong Kong, the opening of four additional ports with the right to appoint consuls to each of these, the abolition of monopolies, a tariff that should be uniform and published, the recognition that there should be equality between officials of similar rank in the two countries, and the acceptance in general terms of complete extraterritoriality. For the United States the right of participation on the basis of equality to all nations, in the concession which had been made to England, was conceded by the Chinese, an act which "became what is really the foundation of the more widely famed 'open-door' policy." Cushing reached Macao, February 24, 1844, and the long negotiations, supported by the presence of the United States vessel *Brandywine*, went on for five months before the signing of the treaty was secured. Cushing, feeling that he could more effectively secure the ratification of this treaty by his presence in the United States, and moved, also, by the fact that his appropriations were nearly exhausted, began, August 24, 1844, his return voyage to the United States. The treaty, from the standpoint of commerce, was considered better than that made by Great Britain, and was used as a model for the treaties which France, and, later, Norway and Sweden, made with China. By the terms of England's supplementary treaty, that power received the advantages gained by the United States, which for the most part secured greater flexibility in the division of the foreign trade between the newly opened ports, and in a coasting trade between the treaty ports in foreign vessels. There was also obtained permission to employ Chinese teachers and purchase Chinese books, which benefited not only the interest

of the merchants and the governments, but also the missionaries. Also important was the provision that the treaty might be revised after twelve years. In contrast with the Treaty of Nanking, which had contained no specific statement as to extra-territoriality, in the American treaty two articles were devoted to that question, and Cushing explained to Calhoun, in a written dispatch, the stipulations which he had succeeded in obtaining in his treaty. The American treaty threw upon the Chinese officials responsibility for the collection of duties, but this, unfortunately, facilitated smuggling on the part of American citizens, by freeing the consuls from responsibility in this connection. The treaty specifically declared opium to be contraband, technically relieving the United States of complicity in the opium trade, but there was little provision for enforcement. The policy of Cushing became the guide for the future.¹⁹⁰

While a vast volume of correspondence poured into the State Department from Cushing, Calhoun sent to him only one instruction of any importance: that dated August 15, 1844, to explain that President Tyler, agreeing to a suggestion made by Cushing in a private letter, had decided to send Cushing full power to treat with Japan should the opportunity offer. Calhoun took occasion to praise the industry and ability with which Cushing had carried on his work.¹⁹¹ It was doubtless after consultation with Cushing, on the return of the latter, that Calhoun wrote to Ingersoll, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, recommending an appropriation for a minister resident, a secretary, and a Chinese interpreter with

adequate salaries in connection with the establishment of a permanent mission to China.¹⁹² As will appear hereafter, A. H. Everett was selected to succeed Cushing.

In the case of the Hawaiian, or Sandwich Islands, the mission of George Brown had been arranged in the period of Webster's Secretaryship, after the visit to this country of William Richards and Timoteo Haalilio, who came upon a mission to secure recognition of Hawaiian independence. From his distant post, Brown deluged the State Department with dispatches, complaining bitterly that he did not receive replies. As he reached the Isthmus, on his way to Hawaii, he reported on the question of mails, and stopping at Papeete, south of Tahiti, he reported on the seizure of the Hawaiian Islands by Lord George Paulett. Of course, the explanation of the silence of the State Department lay in the fact that negotiations concerning Hawaii were carried on in London through our minister to Great Britain, and it was soon known that Paulett's action was disavowed. From Hawaii, Brown reported on the matters of the Pacific coast and ocean generally, and particularly on the difficulties of France and England in Tahiti. The Hawaiian Secretary of State expressed disappointment, Brown wrote, that the United States did not make a treaty at Washington with the Hawaiian commissioners.¹⁹³

One Wiley had committed a serious offence against the Hawaiian laws, and Calhoun, writing to Brown on January 20, 1845, expressed his regret that a case of this sort should have arisen so soon after the recognition of the Hawaiian Government by the United States. He went on to say that although the United States had

no treaty stipulations with the Government of the Islands, we should expect the most-favoured-nation treatment and a jury trial for Americans if the English had it. The United States Government, he said, was willing to make a treaty like that of England. If Great Britain or France should hereafter consent in cases involving the rights of their respective citizens to a trial by jury, *de mediatate lingua* [*sic*], the United States would be willing to make the same concession.¹⁹⁴

Calhoun's probing insight into the expansion of British imperialism, albeit he exaggerated the factor of British designs against Negro slavery in non-British countries, naturally led him to take an interest in the Far East and the regions of the Pacific Ocean; but when one observes the enormous time required for the transmission of the dispatches of Cushing and Brown, one realizes that a single year was far too short a time to strike out any new and active lines in our foreign relations with these distant lands.

II

In his annual message of December 5, 1843, President Tyler had noted the growth of the "Germanic Association of Customs and Commerce," which, established in 1833, now consisted of more than twenty German states, with 27,000,000 people. The President advised Congress that the Zollverein now admitted cotton free, had reduced the import taxes upon rice, and held out a prospect of lowering the rates on tobacco. The United States minister to Berlin had been instructed, he said, to enter upon a negotiation of a

commercial treaty. Upshur added that our minister had been authorized to make treaties concerning the heavy taxes imposed on the property of emigrants, the *droit d'aubaine* and the *droit de détraction*, with Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, the two Hesses, and Baden; also with Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Oldenburg.¹⁹⁵

The result was the Zollverein treaty which Henry Wheaton, at this time nearing the close of his long and honourable career as the representative of the United States in Germany, now negotiated. Senator Choate, of Massachusetts, from the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations, brought in an unfavourable report on the treaty, June 14, 1844, based on two points: first, that in the treaty the President and the Senate undertook to regulate commerce and revenue, a matter which properly belonged to Congress; and, secondly, that the treaty offered insufficient equivalents, on Germany's part, for the concessions which were to be made by the United States. On this occasion, for once the upper house of Congress supported the contention of the lower with regard to the limitations of the treaty-making power. This was not, probably, because the Senate was any less jealous of the House, but because the majority of its members hated the President more. At least the committee undertook to lecture the Executive in what sounds much like a sermon on the late negotiations with regard to Texas.

“To follow, not to lead; to fulfill, not to ordain the law; to carry into effect, by negotiation and compact with foreign Governments, the legislative will, when it has been announced, upon the great subjects of

commerce and revenue; not to interpose with controlling influence; not to go forward with too ambitious enterprise—these seem to the Committee to be the appropriate functions of the Executive.”¹⁹⁶

So, as Calhoun informed Wheaton, the treaty had been recommitted; there had been no vote against it on its merits, but only a decision to support the committee. Calhoun went into quite a lengthy argument to show that the power assumed in the treaty was strictly in accord with precedent and that the only real question was whether Congress had not unlimited discretion to grant or withhold the support of what the President and the Senate might present. He indulged in a characteristic distinction between the reserved and the delegated powers in the Constitution.¹⁹⁷

Tyler sent the Zollverein treaty to the Senate once more the following year, but it was tabled. Wheaton's most important work thus came to nothing.

With characteristic shrewdness, Andrew Jackson, ill at his home in Tennessee, but keenly observing the game of politics, seized on the rejection of the Zollverein treaty as a good campaign issue. He invited Polk's attention to the benefits which the treaty would have secured. "This conduct of our Senators," he wrote, "ought to be kept before the people and this, too, because Great Britain complained of it and would have had to reduce her tariff on these articles or lost this trade. *There never was such treachery to the laborer of the South and West as the rejection of this Treaty.*"¹⁹⁸ Jackson's fling at England was not superfluous, for it was quite true that Aberdeen had in-

formed Everett that he considered the Zollverein treaty to run counter to the commercial convention of 1815 between Great Britain and the United States.¹⁹⁹ Of the fate of the minor treaties, we shall have more to say below.

III

With Pageot, the French minister, Calhoun signed, on February 24, 1845, an additional article which placed robbery on the list of crimes for which the treaty of 1843 had provided extradition.²⁰⁰ An extradition treaty with Prussia which Wheaton had negotiated January 29, 1845, reached this country after the Senate had adjourned, and ultimately failed of ratification.²⁰¹

With Denmark, two old matters were followed up—the “Bergen Prizes” and the obnoxious “Sound Dues” question; but nothing definite was accomplished in Calhoun’s term.²⁰²

IV

While the topics of Texas and slavery and the slave trade filled a very large place in the conduct of diplomatic intercourse between the United States and Great Britain during Calhoun’s Secretaryship, he maintained vigilantly against Great Britain those contentions of American citizens who lived in New England, as well as those which concerned southerners. He instructed Everett to protest against certain legislation in the province of New Brunswick with regard to the export of timber, which violated the third article of the treaty of Washington, and to secure the assent of the British Government to a project intended to facilitate the

lumber trade on the Aroostook.²⁰³ He pressed particularly the seizure of the American schooner *Argus* by the British cutter *Sylph* for transgressing upon British territorial waters.²⁰⁴ This and the seizure of the *Washington* were incidents which foreshadowed the difficulties that led up to the reciprocity treaty of 1854. To this new turn in the history of the New England fisheries, Everett, as was natural, gave particular attention. It is interesting, in the light of all that went through his hands, that Everett felicitated himself most highly on his success in securing from the British Government the right of New Englanders to fish in the Bay of Fundy. This he considered his greatest accomplishment abroad, and he expressed the belief that if he had had time he might have obtained still more extensive privileges.²⁰⁵

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

BOTH because of the shortness of his tenure of office, and because President Tyler kept control of the patronage, Calhoun probably had not the opportunity to accomplish much with regard to the expansion of the Department of State. To his daughter he wrote, shortly after he took up his work: "I was not aware until I took charge of the State Dept. of the immense influence, which may be exerted through it on foreign and domestick relations. I found its duties had been shamefully neglected. I had nothing to sustain me."²⁰⁶ Perhaps he had in mind his thorough-going reformation of the War Department a generation before. To the House Committee on Ways and Means, in a report of February 1845, Calhoun argued for the formation of a Statistical or Miscellaneous Bureau in the State Department, but this object was not obtained.²⁰⁷

His friend, R. K. Crallé, was made Chief Clerk, and his son-in-law, T. G. Clemson, was appointed by President Tyler to the Belgian mission. Apparently there was no other important influence exerted by Calhoun in the direction of appointments,²⁰⁸ for Wise had been chosen before Calhoun became Secretary, and King was rather a follower of Buchanan than of Calhoun. No doubt Calhoun would have been glad to dispense with the services of Edward Everett, but Everett retained his post until after Tyler and Calhoun had left office,

and continued later upon terms of courteous if not friendly correspondence with Calhoun.

Just before Calhoun left the State Department, two important nominations were made, which were confirmed by the Senate in the new Administration. The first of these was that of W. H. Polk, the brother of the incoming President, who was nominated to be chargé for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.²⁰⁹ The other was that of Alexander H. Everett, the Democratic brother of Edward Everett, whose nomination for the Chinese mission was sent in on February 26, 1845, after the return of Cushing from his long absence in the East.²¹⁰

According to the testimony of Charles J. Ingersoll, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, Calhoun was, as Secretary, accessible and disposed to co-operate: Ingersoll tells of a "Texas dinner" on May 18, 1844.²¹¹ Another interesting characterization was that made by the Texan representative, C. H. Raymond: "Mr. Calhoun is case hardened. When he thinks he is right he will go ahead, no matter how great the responsibility; and had he the power, the army would doubtless be ordered right into Texas, to repel any attack on her."²¹² Another comment made after his retirement may be noted: that he desired frequent private letters from those of the diplomatic representatives who were in his confidence, in addition to, if not in the place of, the long formal dispatches which were the rule.²¹³

As we shall explain later, Calhoun was not invited to continue as Secretary of State in the Administration of James K. Polk. Throughout that Administration, however, he exercised no small influence on the course

of diplomatic negotiations in the attitude of a critic whose intentions were friendly. In Polk's view, his motives were determined by political considerations, but Polk's view was distinctly biased. To this phase of Calhoun's later activities, reference will be made more properly below.

If in a few words we undertake to sum up Calhoun's services as Secretary of State, certain facts stand out predominantly. In the first place, Calhoun's work, of necessity, was as much political as diplomatic. Of this, our account of the measures for the annexation of Texas has given ample proof; Calhoun strove, after the failure of the treaty, for annexation by joint resolution, supported Polk in his campaign, and repressed the extremist sentiment in South Carolina.

In the diplomatic realm Upshur and Calhoun had first to eliminate the danger of the abolition of slavery in Texas through British influence. Here the victory was complete; the most positive denials were made officially by the British Government. Next was the problem of keeping the question of annexation free from foreign interference. In this, Calhoun was assisted, as we have seen, first by Mexico's procrastination with regard to accepting British aid, and, secondly, by Lord Aberdeen's fortunate reliance upon Pakenham's advice to delay action. Before Calhoun retired, the joint resolution had passed the Congress of the United States, and Andrew J. Donelson, the man who did most to bring about the acceptance of Texas, had already been long at work. Polk and Buchanan had only to follow in the steps of Tyler and Calhoun.

It is easy to see today that Calhoun's major

diplomatic policy, to defend the institution of slavery against what he considered the machinations of Great Britain, was one that ran counter to the evolution of the nineteenth century, no matter how just might be his skepticism as to the relation of British imperialism and British efforts at emancipation. The significant thing is that Calhoun, so far from conspiring against the United States, took a nationalist stand when he endeavoured to place behind the protection of property in slaves the full power of the Government of the United States. That this was logical cannot be controverted. Had not southern interests the right to demand the same protection in international relations that was accorded to the New England fisheries or to the territorial claims of Maine? But however good this logic, the weakness of the southern argument was that the North, to an increasing degree, declined to support such a position, constitutional guarantees notwithstanding. How could the South make good its demands abroad when they were denied at home?

Lastly, it is to be remembered of Calhoun that, though Secretary of State for but one year, though ill for part of that time, and though absorbed chiefly in securing, despite British counter efforts, the annexation of Texas, nevertheless he laid for Buchanan the foundation of the negotiation with regard to Oregon, gave his support to Wheaton's faithful and efficient endeavours, and looked forward to greater activity in the Orient. What his accomplishments might have been had Polk found it possible to retain his services rests within the realm of conjecture. Should we have secured all of Oregon? Should we have avoided war with Mexico?

The span of Calhoun's life was shortening, but he remained active in politics until the end. He stepped back from the Secretaryship of State into the leadership of South Carolina and re-entered the Senate. In 1845, there was a resurgence of his presidential aspirations; and he made a western tour to attend the great Mississippi Valley Convention at Memphis. But when, despite his warnings, the Mexican War resulted in the acquisition of California and New Mexico, and when, by the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso, it was evident that the North intended to exclude southerners from taking their slave property into the new territory, Calhoun became persuaded that to prevent secession the South must unite and dictate the terms on which it would remain in the Union. Thus came to pass that effort to focus southern opinion which found expression in the Southern Address and the Nashville Convention. The checking of this movement through the compromise measures of 1850 revealed that the South as a whole was still too conservative to see so far ahead as Calhoun. His death, on March 31, 1850, came a few weeks after his final effort to appeal to the country in the speech of March 4, 1850, read for him, because he was too ill to read it himself, by one of his younger lieutenants.

JAMES BUCHANAN

SECRETARY OF STATE

MARCH 5, 1845, TO MARCH 6, 1849

BY

ST. GEORGE LEAKIN SIOUSSAT, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

JAMES BUCHANAN

CHAPTER I

APPOINTMENT AND CAREER

IN contrast with the unusual circumstances which caused the appointment of Calhoun as Secretary of State, the appointment of James Buchanan to that office followed the usual practice of American politics. When the campaign of 1844 had resulted in the choice of Polk, the first question for the President-elect in considering the composition of his Cabinet was not so much whom to appoint as how to avoid reappointing Calhoun. On the one hand, it was Calhoun's influence that had quieted South Carolina, and had held the South in line; on the other hand, no man had such bitter enemies. To retain Calhoun was to throw Benton and his strong following into opposition to the Administration. From the Hermitage Jackson wrote to Polk of Calhoun: "England is the place for him, there to combat with my Lord Aberdeen, the abolition question."¹ Polk had come to Washington about the middle of February, and on the last day of that month he had an interview with Calhoun; told him that it was his purpose to have an entirely new Cabinet; and offered him the mission to England. The next day, Calhoun resigned his office in a friendly note. He continued to serve for some days after Polk's term had begun.²

In Polk's mind the most important consideration appears to have been not the selection of a particular man for a particular office, but rather the best possible utilization, for the sake of harmony, of the offices under his distribution. His first offer was the tender to Silas Wright, of New York, of the Secretaryship of the Treasury. This was plainly an attempt to conciliate the great faction of Van Buren, which still smarted under the rejection at Baltimore. Wright declined, for what seemed good reasons, and Polk asked him to suggest a New Yorker for either the Secretary of State or the Secretary of the Treasury. Wright recommended B. F. Butler for the first, or A. C. Flagg for the second office. Van Buren, consulted by Polk, made the same suggestion of Butler's name, and hoped that Donelson also would have a place in the Cabinet.

This correspondence with Wright and Van Buren had been carried on before Polk left Tennessee. Upon his arrival in Washington, and before his interview with Calhoun, he offered the Secretaryship of State to James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, and the next day, February 18, Buchanan accepted the appointment.³

The new Secretary was born at Cove Gap, in Pennsylvania, April 23, 1791,⁴ and was about four years older than President Polk. He came of a Scotch-Irish family marked by a distinctly religious bent. He graduated in 1809 from Dickinson College, where, however, his life had not been happy. Buchanan studied law in Lancaster, and developed later a practice which he described as "extensive, laborious, and lucrative." In 1814 he volunteered to march with a military company to the relief of Baltimore: and in the same year entered upon

his political career as a member of the lower house of the state legislature. At this time his party affiliation was with the Federalists. He was re-elected for another term. In 1819 an unhappy love affair, followed by the death of Miss Anne Coleman, to whom he had previously been engaged, brought him great sorrow.

Elected in 1820 to the House of Representatives of the United States from the district composed of Lancaster, York and Dauphin Counties, Buchanan served in the House ten years.

It is impossible in this chapter to trace Buchanan's speeches on the subject of internal improvements, the tariff, slavery, the proposed amendment rendering the President eligible for only a single term, or his larger part as chairman of the judiciary committee of the House of Representatives from 1829 on. By the time that Jackson was halfway through his first term as President discussion had already begun as to the election of 1832, and Buchanan's name began to be mentioned in Pennsylvania with reference to the Vice-Presidency.

The succeeding year brought him appointment by Jackson to the mission to Russia which had been left vacant by the recall of John Randolph. As this was Buchanan's first training in the field of foreign affairs this mission should receive some notice.

From St. Petersburg, which he reached in June 1832, he wrote many letters to his friends at home in which are interesting descriptions of the city, the government under the Czar Nicholas, the formality of the diplomatic corps, the censorship of the press and the ignorance of even the higher society regarding America. One

traces in his letters an increasing interest in European politics as well as an obvious concern at the insufficiency of American diplomatic salaries, or rather the excessive amounts received by the representatives of other nations.

The more serious problem of Buchanan's mission was the negotiation of a new commercial treaty. The convention negotiated by Middleton in 1824 and ratified in 1825 had proved entirely inadequate. When Buchanan submitted a plan for a new treaty, some of the Russian ministers were unfavourably disposed, but Count Nesselrode was open to conviction and by the 18th of December (new style) the treaty was signed. His endeavours to conclude a treaty concerning maritime rights were unsuccessful. Russia was not ready to accept American principles with regard to neutral ships.

After an excursion to Moscow in June 1833, Buchanan, in August, left St. Petersburg to return to the United States. He travelled from Kronstadt with the Princess Lievin, the famous friend of Guizot, and her sons. In London he dined with the Princess and her husband and also met Talleyrand, Esterházy and Palmerston. On his way to London he spent some days in Paris at the time when the refusal of the French Chambers to ratify the payments to the United States under the treaty of 1831 was beginning to cause excitement. He had a long conversation with the veteran diplomat Pozzo di Borgo, whose opinions on the general situation in Europe he reported to President Jackson.⁵

Shortly after his return Buchanan was elected to the Senate. President Jackson was in the middle of his second term of office. During Buchanan's absence, the

storm of the nullification controversy had reached its crisis and had waned, and the tariff dispute had been compromised. The most important political agitation was that which concerned the removal of the deposits from the Bank of the United States, although hardly less interest attached to the settlement of the Indian problem, the disposal of the surplus revenue and the Specie Circular. Into these and the other domestic issues of the next ten years, Buchanan threw himself vigorously, working with Benton, as a faithful captain in the Democratic ranks, and at the same time keeping a skilful hand over the political machinery in Pennsylvania.

Our account of these years must be limited to a mere mention of Buchanan's constant interest, as a senator, in our foreign relations. November 8, 1835, our chargé in Paris, Barton, asked for his passports, and at the end of the month left Paris, closing the American Legation. The matter of the French Spoliation Claims, which thus interrupted our relations with France, as the reader of the previous volume has noted, was finally adjusted in the winter of 1835-1836. In January and February, 1835, Buchanan spoke on the subject, and in the same months a year later he made two extended speeches upon the same topic, in which he vigorously defended Jackson's course against the criticisms of Calhoun and Clay, and in which he showed the same ability in analysis and the same capacity to master details which were to appear later in some of his state papers.⁶

He was likewise deeply interested in the question of the recognition of Texas. He supported, April 11, 1838, the recommendation of the President that an act be

passed authorizing reprisals and the use of the naval force of the United States against Mexico in the event of a refusal by the Mexican Government to come to an amicable adjustment of the matters in controversy between the two countries, upon another demand thereof made from on board one of our vessels of war on the coast of Mexico. By this time, Buchanan had been made chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, and this particular speech is interesting because the situation at the time afforded almost complete analogy to that which later faced Buchanan during his Secretaryship. As the northeastern boundary became a subject of controversy, Buchanan turned his attention to that problem, again revealing a minute study of the historical and legal phases thereof. On this same subject he made a long report, July 4 of this year, and spoke frequently thereon throughout the whole period of the controversy, down to the time of the negotiation of the Webster-Ashburton treaty.⁷ As early as February 7, 1838, he had argued that we should assert our right to the Oregon country. In March 1844, at the time when Senators Semple, of Illinois, and Archer, of Virginia, were urging resolutions which looked to the giving of notice to Great Britain of the termination of the Convention of 1827, Buchanan gave his support to this proposal and promised at some later date to demonstrate the validity of our title to the Oregon country. Another lengthy speech was made by Buchanan June 8, 1844, in support of the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas. He was one of those voting to ratify the treaty of Tyler and Calhoun: and when the Congressional fight of the short session of 1844-1845, over the

joint resolution for the annexation of Texas, was on, he made another elaborate argument in behalf of Texas.⁸

By 1841 Buchanan, like Calhoun, had reached the political dignity of a presidential aspirant. At the time of his third election to the Senate, in the winter of 1842-1843, the Democratic members of the Pennsylvania legislature asked permission to nominate him before the national convention as Pennsylvania's candidate for the Presidency. Buchanan, thoroughly regular, having discovered before the election that the majority of the delegates were pledged to Van Buren, withdrew his name from the canvass in a public letter which gave an impression of voluntary action on the writer's part that was quite in contrast with the somewhat bitter tone of Calhoun's address of withdrawal.⁹ Just as the convention was about to meet, Buchanan wrote another letter, May 25, declining to be a candidate against Van Buren, but expressing a willingness to run if Van Buren should withdraw or if it were found that he could not obtain the nomination.¹⁰ There seems to be no reason to suppose that Buchanan was informed beforehand of the plans which led to the nomination of Polk. Buchanan took an active part in the canvass, and after an exchange of several letters, wrote, November 4, to congratulate Polk on his election. Somewhat curiously he stressed his belief that Polk should rely on the younger men, as the older ones had had their day and should be content.¹¹

Buchanan was not the only Pennsylvanian to be considered for the Secretaryship of State, for the faction of the Pennsylvania democracy which followed the lead of G. M. Dallas, who had just been elected Vice

President, was strongly opposed to his appointment. Dallas offered, instead, the name of Robert J. Walker, Senator from Mississippi, who was connected with Dallas by marriage. On the other hand, Buchanan had received endorsement from the members of the Democratic electoral college chosen in Pennsylvania to cast their votes for Polk—though Dallas tried to explain away this recommendation and Richard Rush also added the weight of his name in opposition.¹² When Walker was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, the objections of Dallas were no doubt removed. At any rate, in appointing Buchanan, Polk could feel that he was honouring one of the presidential candidates of the last campaign, that he was rendering a pleasing compliment to the state of Pennsylvania, and that he was securing for the chief post in his Cabinet a man eminently qualified by political prominence, by education, by diplomatic experience, and by his interest in those matters most in the public mind, to be his principal adviser in the difficult task which confronted him.

CHAPTER II

THE OREGON NEGOTIATION; "LOOK- ING JOHN BULL STRAIGHT IN THE EYE"

IN the preceding sketch it has already been told how the new President and the new Secretary, aided by the efficient minister of the United States in Texas, Andrew J. Donelson, brought to a safe conclusion in July 1845, the most important diplomatic endeavour inherited from their predecessors—the annexation of Texas—and it was made clear that this was accomplished against the most vigorous opposition of the representative of the British Government in Texas. Early in March, while he was anxiously waiting to hear of Donelson's efforts in Texas, Buchanan learned from our ministers at Paris and at London respectively of the joint Anglo-French effort to dissuade the Government and people of Texas from giving their consent to annexation. Buchanan, replying to King on March 25, wrote regretfully of the "painful disappointment" which the course of the French Government had evoked and left it to our minister to decide whether he should make a formal communication of this feeling to the Government of France.¹³ Of this we shall have more to say hereafter. When to this evidence of French deception there was added the revelation of Elliot's efforts in Mexico and his attempt to accomplish his purposes secretly, the effect upon the minds of Polk and Buchanan may be imagined.

Commenting scornfully on Elliot's subterfuges as "at war with all the modern usages of diplomacy and with the character of the British Government which is generally bold and frank if not always just in its policy towards foreign nations," Buchanan took comfort in the fact that "by obtaining the consent of Mexico to the independence of Texas," Elliot had "deprived that power of the only miserable pretext which it had for a war against the United States, whilst he has fomented among the Mexican people a spirit of hostility against us which may plunge that ill-fated country into such a war."¹⁴ Thus the new Administration began its work with an increase of resentment against the interference of Europe in general, and Great Britain in particular, in American affairs, which was not without some just ground. It is important to have in mind this psychological condition.

We may be sure that when Polk and Buchanan came to survey the state of affairs bequeathed to them in the West Indies, in Brazil, in the Argentine, and in California, they found nothing to relieve this attitude of resentment and suspicion. In the months from March to July, 1845, while Donelson was still at work, and it was uncertain what Mexico would do, the problems of defending Texas, or if possible propitiating Mexico, were pressing, but it will be convenient to defer a consideration of these and proceed first to the negotiation in regard to Oregon.

Before Polk entered upon the Presidency, he stood definitely committed to Oregon as well as to Texas.¹⁵ In his inaugural, he again declared that "our title to the country of the Oregon is 'clear and unquestionable.'" It will be noted that in contrast with the words of the

Democratic platform of 1844 he did not say specifically "the whole"; but he promised to "assert and maintain by all constitutional means" the right of the United States. It was our duty, he said, to protect our people who were preparing to perfect our title by occupying the Oregon country with their wives and children and to extend over them the jurisdiction of our laws. In the meantime, every obligation imposed by treaty or conventional stipulations should be sacredly respected. As has already been indicated,¹⁶ Buchanan, no less than Polk, stood committed to the same position. Indeed, the very selection of Buchanan would be interpreted in England as but reinforcing the "higher tone" which marked the President's inaugural.

The English newspapers made caustic comments upon Polk's inaugural address and upon the legislation which had been attempted in Congress at the preceding session. The *Times* remarked of Polk that "in spite of his marauders and what he terms his Constitutional rights, the territory of Oregon will never be wrested from the British Crown to which it belongs, but by war." Everett thought this was not an official view, and tried to explain that party politics were at work in England and that the Ministry was taunted and goaded by some of the Liberal newspapers.¹⁷ Both Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary, and Peel, the Prime Minister, spoke with restraint, but the former said: "We possess rights which, in our opinion, are clear and unquestionable; and, by the blessing of God, and with your support, those rights we are fully prepared to maintain"; and Sir Robert Peel criticized the President for alluding to an other than friendly termination of the

negotiation.¹⁸ Early in April the mail steamer was detained to receive dispatches for Canada with a view to looking after British interests in Oregon.¹⁹

From all this there was soon a repercussion upon the American mind. General Jackson died June 8, 1845. Only a little over a month before, the old soldier addressed to Polk a letter full of resentment against the expressions voiced in England, which he called "the rattling of British drums to alarm us." He thought one object was to prevent, if Britain could, the re-annexation of Texas by shadowing forth war and rumours of war. "This bold avowal," wrote the General, "by peel & Russell of perfect claim to Oregon must be met as boldly, by our denial of their right and confidence in our own. . . . I gave a thousand pledges for your cour[a]ge & firmness both in *war* & in *peace*, to carry on the administration of our Government." Jackson drew an analogy from British perfidy, as he called it, in the northeastern boundary dispute. To "prevent war with England a bold & undaunted front must be exposed. England with all her Boast dare not go to war. . . ." ²⁰

There was a long delay in the appointment of a successor to Edward Everett as United States minister to London. As was to be expected, the appointment, when offered to Calhoun, was at once declined, although Calhoun seems later to have been willing to consider the offer of a special mission to England.²¹ Polk then tendered the British mission to one after another of several South Carolinians of prominence. Each in succession declined. Although various excuses were offered, we may suspect that resentment at the displacement of

Calhoun, and unwillingness to be committed to Polk, had something to do with these refusals. It was not until June that Polk, after endeavouring to secure the services of, first, Van Buren, and then Levi Woodbury, finally appointed Louis McLane, of Delaware, who had been our minister to Great Britain in 1829-1831, Secretary of the Treasury 1831-1833, and Secretary of State 1833-1834.²² In these first three months of Polk's Administration, Edward Everett, though expecting his recall, continued to represent the United States at the Court of Saint James's.²³

At length Buchanan, on July 12, told McLane that the President, seeing no dishonour in pursuing the course adopted by Monroe and acquiesced in by all succeeding administrations, had decided to propose once more to Great Britain to divide the Oregon Territory by the forty-ninth parallel of latitude, with a further offer to make free to Great Britain south of this parallel any port or ports on Vancouver Island which that Government might desire. Buchanan argued that the withdrawal of the concession of the free navigation of the Columbia formerly offered should not remove the hope that Great Britain might accept our proposal. For the navigation of the Columbia, Buchanan urged, would lead to endless difficulty, and we now offered to make free to Great Britain the Vancouver Island ports. The phraseology was such, however, as not positively to exclude the hope that free navigation might be granted.²⁴

The same day, Buchanan addressed Pakenham, answering the note which the latter had written to Calhoun on the 12th of September last, when he requested Calhoun to make some proposal in lieu of that which

our Government had rejected. Buchanan took up as the principal topic of this note a presentation of the title of the United States to the region north of the Columbia; or in other words, to the "whole of Oregon," and presented an extended destructive criticism of Great Britain's contentions regarding the importance to its claim of the Nootka Sound Convention of 1790. Concerning the narrower Columbia River claim, he elaborated Calhoun's argument. The note closed with the offer which we have just summarized in discussing the instructions to McLane. There was no comment on the omission of the concession of the navigation of the river.²⁵

Four days later, at what was described as the seventh conference, Buchanan delivered to Pakenham his note of July 12, 1845. Pakenham replied at great length, July 29, traversing Buchanan's arguments. In concluding this paper, Pakenham declared that he did not feel at liberty to accept the American proposal, which offered less than that tendered in 1826. He closed with the expression of the hope "that the American plenipotentiary will be prepared to offer some further proposal for the settlement of the Oregon question more consistent with fairness and equity, and with the reasonable expectations of the British Government," as defined in the earlier communications which he had made.²⁶

Here was a serious *faux pas* on the part of the British negotiator. Exception might be taken to the words "fairness and equity," and above all, Pakenham had rejected Buchanan's proposal without referring it to his own Government, which suggested that if he had

been so instructed, Aberdeen had intended to terminate the negotiation. Therefore, in a note dated August 30, 1845, which contained a long historical argument in rebuttal of Pakenham's statements, Buchanan, in obedience to the instruction of the President, withdrew the offer which the United States had made. This was accompanied with the statement that the President still cherished the hope for a peaceful settlement of the controversy.²⁷

From the impasse which had thus apparently been reached, there seemed to be but two ways of escape. One was for Great Britain again to propose arbitration, which Pakenham in due time offered twice, the second time suggesting the reference to arbitration of the whole title to the Oregon country instead of merely an equitable determination of a boundary. These offers of arbitration were courteously declined by the United States.²⁸ The other solution involved niceties of diplomatic intercourse and touched the pride of Great Britain. This was for Great Britain to make some new offer in the diplomatic bargaining; and it seemed impossible to the British to do this without loss of dignity, in view of the fact that Polk had withdrawn our offer and fallen back on the claim to the whole of Oregon. At this point, therefore, it will be well to pause and remind the reader once more, first, that, as everybody knew, the issue really was limited to the territory between the Columbia and the forty-ninth parallel because both sides in former negotiations had offered to yield their larger claims; and, secondly, that Aberdeen had already come to look upon the concession of the forty-ninth parallel as a possibility. Indeed, we now know that this same possibility

had been thought of even by Sir George Simpson, the head of the Hudson's Bay Company. The problem of the diplomatists, therefore, was not the judicial one of determining a boundary, but that of making such an adjustment as would satisfy national pride on either side of the Atlantic.²⁹ Pakenham made futile efforts to persuade Buchanan to recede from the withdrawal of the American offer and undertook to distinguish between an inability to accept and a rejection on his part, but in vain. On the other hand, it was not until May, 1846, ten months after the first interchange of notes between Buchanan and Pakenham, that Lord Aberdeen made up his mind to submit an offer to the American Government. In the interval, the proposals of arbitration which have been mentioned constituted the chief efforts of a strictly diplomatic character. To understand the ultimate success of the treaty we have to return again to the field of politics.

On the American side, Polk took a position which he endeavoured to maintain with consistency. He thought the British Government was bluffing and would not go to war, and that "the only way to treat John Bull was to look him straight in the eye."³⁰ He stood on the claim to the whole of Oregon. This attitude created difficulties. It was contrary to the instructions given to McLane, who wrote to Buchanan that such a position would place him "*hors de combat* upon the Oregon affair" until he received further information.³¹ Polk's position aroused the strong dissent of Buchanan and excited the bitter criticism of Calhoun.³² Even Benton, who had been unfriendly to Polk since the Democratic national convention of 1844, but who, through Bu-

chanan's efforts, became reconciled to the President, expressed doubt as to our title to the whole of Oregon. After an interview which he held with Benton October 24, Polk set down four points upon which the two agreed: first, that the one year's notice provided by the Convention of 1827 should be given to Great Britain looking to the termination of the joint occupation of the Oregon country. Secondly, that the laws and jurisdiction of the United States should be extended over our citizens in Oregon in the same degree as those which the British Parliament had passed in 1821 for their subjects. Thirdly, that blockhouses or stockade forts should be raised on the way to Oregon for the protection of immigrants. Fourthly, that our Indian policy should be extended to the Oregon country. These things could be done without violating the agreement of 1827, but both doubted, on the other hand, whether without violating that treaty, land grants could be made to immigrants until after the expiration of the year's notice.³³

In his first annual message, which he sent to Congress in December 1845, after discussing at length our relations with Mexico, Polk turned his attention to the Oregon negotiation. He urged that provision be made by law for the giving of notice under the Convention of 1827 for the termination of that Convention, and recommended the specific measures which he had discussed with Benton and which we have explained above, and also the establishment of an overland mail. He concluded with the statement that at the end of a year, after notice had been given, we should have reached a period when the national rights in Oregon should either be abandoned or firmly maintained. The British

proposal of compromise would never be entertained by the United States. From this he passed significantly to his famous restatement of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, which we shall analyse in another place.

Although the proper adjustment of the Oregon question was in the most delicate stage of diplomatic negotiation, the senators and representatives of the Twenty-ninth Congress surpassed their predecessors in debating vigorously all phases of the question. In the debate, which took the widest course, some of the northwestern Democrats declared insistently for the whole of Oregon; while on the side of restraint were heard not only Whig senators, but Calhoun, representing the southern attitude, and, as we have already noted, Benton of Missouri, whose weight in the Democratic party was of the greatest.³⁴ A resolution finally passed both houses April 23, 1846, which authorized the President, at his discretion, to give notice to Great Britain for the abrogation of the Convention of 1827. Polk was gratified at this result, though he regretted that the action had been so long delayed and expressed objection to the preamble which the Senate had prefaced to the resolution. This preamble placed the abrogation not on the ground that the United States had the sole or the better title, but on the desirability "that the respective claims of the United States and Great Britain should be definitely settled, and that said territory may no longer than need be remain subject to the evil consequences of the divided allegiance of its American and British population, and of the confusion and conflict of national jurisdictions, dangerous to the cherished peace and good understanding of the two countries": while the purpose

was expressed "that the attention of the Governments of both countries may be the more earnestly directed to the adoption of all proper measures for a speedy and amicable adjustment of the differences and disputes in regard to the said territory."³⁵

Thus, to outward appearance, as late as April 1846, diplomacy had failed to settle the Oregon question, which had taken on a new and serious phase by the authorization which had been given to Polk to terminate the agreement of 1827. Yet no sinister result followed; on the contrary Lord Aberdeen after all made a new proposal, and Polk, to employ Byron's well-known phrase, "swearing he would ne'er consent, consented." To explain these surprising reversals will be the attempt of the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER III

OREGON NEGOTIATION; ECONOMIC FACTORS

WHILE the communications with reference to Oregon interchanged between the United States and Great Britain were expressed in the most courteous tone, there had not been lacking upon either side the element of threat. In his dispatch of January 3, 1846, McLane reported that Lord Aberdeen had said that "with the sincerest desire to avoid it, they were obliged to look to the possibility of a rupture with the United States."³⁶ The President, on the other hand, so far yielded to the militarists in Congress as to send, March 24, 1846, a message in which he charged England with increasing armaments and warlike preparations, and in which he drew attention to the fact that Mexican relations necessitated keeping nearly two-thirds of our army on the southwestern frontier. Nevertheless one doubts whether the rattling of the sabre was very seriously intended.

On March 23, 1846, only a day before this "preparedness" message, the President addressed Congress in a special message devoted to another issue with Great Britain. This message was as pacific as the other was warlike. He submitted correspondence between Pakenham and Buchanan which contained an arrangement for the adjustment of the claims of England and the United States respectively arising from the collection of certain

import duties in a manner contrary to the second article of the commercial convention of July 3, 1815. The most important matter in question had been the duty which, between 1836 and 1842, had, according to our ideas, been levied to excess on American rough rice. Everett had pushed the American claim without success until it was agreed to offset against this a similar one on the part of Great Britain of far less financial consequence based on certain clauses of the tariff of 1842. The question itself was not so important as the determination to reach a settlement, for this was but a foreshadowing of the larger problem of tariff adjustment.³⁷

In his inaugural address, Polk, repeating his statement that while not adverse to "reasonable incidental protection to our home industries" he was "opposed to a tariff for protection merely, and not for revenue," had argued that within the "revenue principle" there were sufficient discriminations possible to afford all necessary incidental protection. In his annual message of December 1845, he had gone farther, and calling attention to the favourable condition of the treasury, had attacked the tariff act of 1842 and had recommended the reduction of the protective feature in favour of a tariff more strictly for revenue. What Polk compressed into a few paragraphs was developed at great length and very ably by his Secretary of the Treasury, Robert J. Walker, who, besides taking such a prominent part in bringing to pass the annexation of Texas, made to the Polk Administration two other contributions of great importance—a highly vigorous support of territorial expansion and the accomplishment of an approximation to international free trade.³⁸

There followed an effort to unite this minor tariff issue with the major Oregon dispute. Late in January the President had suggested to the Cabinet a plan like that which Tyler had once tried to promote—to combine with a settlement of the Oregon boundary a treaty of commerce by which England and the United States should each relax its tariff upon the imports of the other. Polk expressed the belief that the reduction of our tariff would be an object with Great Britain and that to attain it that Government might be willing to surrender its claim to the whole territory, on receiving a round sum to enable it to indemnify the Hudson's Bay Company for the valuable improvements which it had made in Oregon.³⁹ Although nothing more appears to have been said of this to the Cabinet, on January 28, 1846, Polk, in a long, "private and confidential" letter to McLane, elaborated in detail the same proposal.⁴⁰

The British Government, McLane believed, preferred not to make such a treaty;⁴¹ and the only wonder is that so good a politician as Polk made such a suggestion, in the light of the experience with Wheaton's negotiation. But a similar result might be arrived at—though not for the whole of Oregon—by the simple process of legislation, through the repeal of the Corn Laws and the reduction of the American tariff. The westerners would welcome a better market for their grain, which under the existing arrangements tended to be drawn through Canada for export; and the lower tariff would appeal to the followers of Birney in the North, as well as to the southern Democrats. So much for the American aspect of the case.

To understand the attitude of the British Govern-

ment a further explanation is essential. There were three important non-American factors which gave Great Britain pause in contemplating any war with the United States, even though that republic bade fair to be embarrassed in hostilities with Mexico.

First, Lord Aberdeen, though doubtless vexed by Guizot's effort to face both ways, was desperately intent upon preserving friendship with France: but the matter—more important to the European mind—of the Spanish marriages, which later, in the Ministry of Lord Palmerston, was to wreck the Anglo-French entente, was already in the summer and fall of 1845 arousing suspicion of Guizot in the minds of Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham. The difference became so great that Aberdeen undertook to resign from the Ministry, objecting strenuously to the naval preparations which he thought were being made against France. Peel insisted on keeping Aberdeen, though the latter still regretted the change in English feeling.⁴²

Quite as important, secondly, was the political crisis which the year 1845 was bringing to a head in Great Britain. The economic condition of England at the time when Peel entered upon his second premiership had been very bad and had demanded stern remedies. Of Peel's measures, the most important for our consideration were those which had to do with shipping, with the Corn Laws and with the tariffs. As to the Navigation Acts, we shall have more to say below. Concerning the relation of the tariff on sugar to the slavery question, we have spoken in discussing Calhoun's policy: Peel's general tariff policy will come before us hereafter. Now we may focus attention upon the great reversal

in British economic policy to which Peel announced his conversion in the autumn of 1845, when he proposed radical changes in the Corn Laws. This led to Peel's resignation, December 5, but the inability of the Whigs to form a Cabinet led to his return to office for another year.⁴³

Thirdly, in October 1845, there had come the disheartening news of the destruction, by the potato blight, of one-half of the whole Irish crop of that year, which threatened famine for the winter, and no seed for the spring planting. Already, Peel has written,⁴⁴ he had before this resolved to take the unusual step of purchasing on account of the Government a large quantity of Indian corn in the United States. The purchase was conducted by the Barings firm, who acted for the British Treasury, that department taking all responsibility.

It is too much to conclude that under no conditions would England have gone to war with the United States, but it is certainly to be regarded as highly unlikely that with French relations in a delicate situation, with the abandonment of protectionism in mind, and with England buying sorely needed grain from the United States to meet a threatened famine, Sir Robert Peel would have risked a war with this country if it could be avoided in any honourable way.

Thus the note which Greville made in his celebrated journal in December becomes intelligible—that Aberdeen's most earnest desire was to get over the Oregon affair as well as he could. "He knows that nothing will have so great an effect in America, nothing tend so materially to the prevalence of pacific counsels, as an announcement that the corn laws are going to be

repealed." Later, Greville wrote that in a conversation Lord Aberdeen "treated the President's message with great indifference, and said he was certain to settle the question in the course of the year, and confident there was no disposition to go to war in America." Peel himself emphasized the connection between the repeal of the Corn Laws and the Oregon negotiation when he wrote: "The admission of maize will, I believe, go far to promote a settlement of Oregon."⁴⁵

Polk had reverted to a claim to the whole of Oregon, and had not departed from this position, despite the evidence that it did not command universal support. While Polk continued this stand, the British Government could hardly be expected to make a new offer. Polk's loophole of escape from this impasse was the adoption of the device of consultation with the Senate before signing the treaty. As early as December 13, Buchanan had hinted to McLane that the President might do this: and he put the suggestion more definitely January 29, 1846. Somewhat later McLane expressed his belief that the British Government was willing to make a new proposal if it could "officially know that the proposition would probably be acceptable at Washington"; and, on February 26, 1846, Buchanan, replying to this dispatch of McLane, repeated more explicitly to our minister that Polk was ready to retreat by throwing the burden of the decision upon the Senate.⁴⁶ This reached McLane in March: and when the resolution for the abrogation of the Convention of 1827 followed and was found to be couched in friendly language, Lord Aberdeen—at least so he informed the House of Lords—at once submitted his new offer.⁴⁷ When he received McLane's draft of

Aberdeen's proposal, Polk wrote: "It is certain that I cannot accept it and there is a matter of doubt in my mind whether it [will] be such as I ought to submit to the Senate for their previous advice before acting upon it." But after the arrival of the proposed treaty and after Cabinet meetings which lasted several hours and in which opinion was much divided as to the form of the statement that Polk should send to the Senate,⁴⁸ the treaty was sent in, with an accompanying message, on the afternoon of June 10. By this time we were already at war with Mexico. Polk referred to the example of President Washington in asking the previous advice of the Senate upon pending negotiations with foreign powers, and in copying this example he was moved, he said, by the fact that the Senate had shared in conferring on him the authority to give notice to Great Britain. He made no recommendation, but referred to his message of December 2 and said that the opinions therein expressed remained unchanged. Two days later, June 12, the Senate advised acceptance of the proposal by a vote of 38 to 12, and on June 15, 1846, the treaty was signed by Buchanan and Pakenham. Formal sanction to ratification was given by the Senate June 18, and next day the President ratified the treaty. Ratifications were exchanged in London July 17, and August 6 the treaty was proclaimed.

As to the boundary, the treaty followed the plan long since suggested by Everett. This was to run westward along the forty-ninth parallel to the middle of the channel which separates Vancouver Island from the mainland; then southerly through the channel and the Fuca Straits to the Pacific. The navigation of the

whole channel and straits south of forty-nine degrees was to remain free and open to both parties.

By the second article the Hudson's Bay Company and all British subjects trading with the same were given the right to navigate the great northern branch of the Columbia from the point where this was intersected by the forty-ninth parallel to the main stream of the Columbia and thence to the ocean, and all portages along that stream were to be free and open. British and American subjects were to be on the same footing in navigating the river, but the Government of the United States might regulate the navigation in any way not inconsistent with the treaty.

The third article provided that the possessory rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, or any other British subjects already in the lawful occupation of property, should be respected.

The fourth article confirmed to the Puget Sound Agricultural Company the titles to its farms, lands and other property on the north side of the Columbia, with the provision, however, that the United States might later buy these properties at a fair valuation.⁴⁹

It remains to add but one further comment. After Buchanan's declination of the second proposal for arbitration, no communication of great importance regarding the Oregon matter passed from the Secretary of State to the British minister throughout February, March and April. Between February 26 and June 6, moreover, only two instructions of importance went from Buchanan to McLane, one of which conveyed information as to the passage of the resolution of notice. It seems clear, therefore, that while the negotiation

technically was not transferred to London, it was the work of Louis McLane, the worthy successor of Edward Everett, which kept the situation in England well in hand. Although racked by a painful illness, so that Lord Aberdeen transacted business at the American minister's residence, McLane saw to it that when the proper time came for the submission of the British offer, no untoward slip had taken place to prevent the prompt and successful termination of the controversy. His success as a diplomat was generously recognized in the House of Lords, when Lord Aberdeen said: "I am well assured that there is no person in this House, or in the country, who more cordially participates in the feeling of satisfaction which it [the settlement] is fitted to produce than Mr. M'Lane." It was Polk's intention, if Buchanan had resigned, to invite McLane to succeed him as Secretary of State.⁵⁰

CHAPTER IV

APPROACH OF WAR WITH MEXICO

HAVING followed to its end the negotiation concerning Oregon, we must now go back to the spring of 1845; when, as we have seen, Texas rejected the concessions which Mexico, prompted by Great Britain, at last offered and accepted annexation to the United States under the terms of the congressional resolution of March. We shall examine, first, our attempts to propitiate Mexico, and secondly, on the failure of these efforts, the diplomatic phases of our war with Mexico.

On March 6, 1845, the Mexican minister, General Almonte, had written to Calhoun protesting against the resolution of annexation and terminating his mission. To reply to Almonte was one of Buchanan's first tasks: and he informed the Mexican minister that the policy of annexation was irrevocably decided "so far as the United States are concerned." The tone of his letter was very conciliatory and promised the most strenuous efforts toward amicable adjustment of every cause of complaint and the cultivation of the kindest and most friendly relations between the sister republics.⁵¹

In view of the attitude of Mexico the old question of the protection of Texas had to be considered; yet it was necessary to avoid the slightest pretext for the assertion that either the Government or the people of Texas were influenced by the presence of our armed force.⁵² On June 15, General Taylor was ordered to transfer his

troops from Fort Jesup, on the western border of Louisiana, to occupy such a position "on or near the Rio Grande del Norte" as would be "best adapted to repel invasion." In obedience to this order Taylor gathered his forces at Corpus Christi, at the mouth of the Nueces River on its south side, and here the little army remained until the following March, when, as a result of orders dated January 13, 1846, Taylor moved to a point opposite Matamoras on the Rio Grande, and there erected Fort Brown.

These military activities, it must be remembered, were based upon the most violent threats of war on the part of Mexico, the Government of which was now seeking vigorously the foreign assistance which might have been so effective in 1844.⁵³ Donelson reported to Buchanan from Texas that Mexican troops were on the Rio Grande and that Elliot had threatened that the rejection of his proposals would be followed immediately by an invasion from Mexico; yet Polk had already taken up the effort to re-establish peaceful relations with Mexico. In March 1845, Buchanan sent a secret agent, William S. Parrott, who had practised in Mexico the profession of dentistry with a record of great financial extravagance and bankruptcy, but who, nevertheless, appears to have possessed the qualifications of a competent agent. Parrott was instructed to reach the Mexican authorities and by every honourable effort to convince them that it was to their true interest to restore friendly relations. Texas would never under any circumstances be abandoned, but all questions with Mexico would be met on a friendly and liberal basis. This was in effect Calhoun's position of 1844; but in the

meantime, annexation, of course, had become a fact. Parrott reported hopefully and at last expressed his own belief that an envoy from the United States would be well received. This view seemed to be confirmed by dispatches from Black and from Dimond, our consuls at Mexico City and Vera Cruz respectively. When this opinion of Parrott's reached Washington, the President and his Cabinet must have been the more pleased because their information from other sources had been quite to the contrary. Through Baron Gerolt, the Prussian minister, who had received letters from Mexico under date of June 28, Polk and his advisers were informed that Mexico was increasing its army and ordering it to the Rio Grande. Polk wrote to Buchanan, who was at Bedford Springs, urging his return to the capital, and revealed that the developments which were taking place hastened the necessity for settling the Oregon question.⁵⁴

As the summer of 1845 approached its end, the President prepared for more definite action with regard to Mexico. The result was the sending to Mexico of John Slidell, member of Congress from Louisiana, who had taken an active part in swinging Louisiana into line for Polk, and who, as early as May, had been approached by Buchanan with reference to a mission to Mexico. Polk and his Cabinet agreed, September 16, that the time had come to attempt to combine a settlement of the difficulties with Mexico and the acquisition of California by the United States. Next day, it was decided to wait and to secure from the Mexican Government, through Black, a definite statement that a minister would be received, but if information came in

the meanwhile which rendered this reasonably certain, Slidell should proceed to Mexico at once without waiting for Black's answer. Black secured from Peña y Peña, the Mexican Secretary of Relations, after a confidential interview with that minister, an autograph note, which was understood to contain a promise that a minister from the United States would be received, and this was ratified by the Mexican Congress. The note, brought back by Parrott, reached Buchanan November 9, 1845. The next day, Parrott was persuaded to accept the Secretaryship of Legation in Mexico City, and Slidell's commission as minister was signed. Slidell had already been instructed to proceed to Pensacola. His papers were sent to that point.⁵⁵

On the basis of the promise made by the Mexican Government, Slidell was told to present himself to that Government as the envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States. He was to endeavour to counteract the influence of foreign powers exerted in Mexico and to restore those ancient relations of peace and good will which formerly existed between the two Governments.

Buchanan next took up the already adjudicated claims of American citizens against the Mexican Government. It is unnecessary to repeat this part of the instructions, for we have dealt with the matter above and have a clear idea of Mexico's utter failure in this respect. Buchanan said, not unreasonably, that these claims "must" speedily be adjusted now. Mexico, however, had no money, but in that paragraph of the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas which reserved to the Government of the United States the

adjustment of all questions of boundary which might arise with other governments, Buchanan found the means for satisfying these claims. He waived aside the Mexican contention that the Nueces and not the Rio del Norte was the true western boundary of Texas. But with regard to the border between New Mexico and Texas Buchanan proposed bargaining. He described the advantage to Mexico that would arise if New Mexico were included in the United States on the ground of the expense of defending it against the savages, and the constant possibility of quarrels with Texas. For the boundary defined by the Congress of Texas on December 19, 1836, "to wit: beginning at the mouth of the Rio Grande, thence up the principal stream of said river to its source, thence due north to the forty-second degree of north latitude," the United States would assume the payment of the claims of our citizens. For either one of two other alternative boundaries, both of which would include New Mexican territory west of the river up to forty-two degrees, the United States would not only assume the claims, but pay \$5,000,000 in addition. The proposition thus far was limited to New Mexico, and had nothing to do with California.

Then the Secretary took up "another subject of vast importance to the United States, which will demand your particular attention." This was the acquisition of California, which Slidell was to use his best efforts to accomplish. Here, again, alternative suggestions were made. The lesser offer—that of the assumption of the claims and \$20,000,000—was made "for any boundary commencing at any point on the western line of New

Mexico, and running due West to the Pacific, so as to include the bay and harbor of San Francisco." But Slidell might offer \$25,000,000 in addition to the assumption of the claims, for a boundary which should run due west (1) from the southern extremity of New Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, or (2) from any other point on its western boundary which would embrace Monterey within our limits.⁵⁶

Thus California, the disturbed condition of which we have noted in the sketch of Calhoun, is brought once more into the diplomacy of the United States. Although Slidell was to try to purchase the Mexican title to California, this was not made a *sine qua non*: the essential object was the adjustment of the Texan boundary and the Mexican claims. But unquestionably Polk intended to acquire California; and a powerful stimulus in this direction lay in the apprehension of the President and the Secretary of State with regard to British purposes on the west coast of America. It has been clearly shown that the British Government, indisposed, at the moment, to undertake further colonial expansion, not only did not take any steps towards securing California, but actually discouraged the suggestions and offers which were repeatedly thrust upon it by its subordinate officers in Mexico and California.⁵⁷ But the suspicions of Polk and Buchanan must be estimated in the light of the circumstances which confronted them. They could not penetrate Lord Aberdeen's mind, and they were in possession of ample information as to the activities of the British agents in Mexico and California. With the experience that they had had of Aberdeen's policy in regard to Texas they were perfectly justified in

believing that Great Britain was trying to stand in the way of America's interest, if not itself endeavouring to get California.⁵⁸ It is indisputable that on December 31, 1844, Lord Aberdeen went so far as to direct his representative in Mexico to refrain from notifying the Mexican Government that revolution was imminent in California, and at the same time instructed one of the British consuls in Lower California to the effect that if California should throw off the Mexican yoke, Great Britain would view with much dissatisfaction the establishment of a protectoral power by any other state; later in the summer and autumn of 1845, Lord Aberdeen discussed with Tomás Murphy, the Mexican minister to Great Britain, proposals exactly like those as to which American rumour had been busy: the putting into effect of a scheme of colonization in California that might lead to British intervention and the plan of mortgaging Mexican lands in California to a British company. Murphy expressed himself to his Government as entirely persuaded that if France had been willing to support Great Britain, that country would have been ready to go to war with the United States to prevent the absorption of California by this country. Such an idea might have been merely a convenient excuse on Lord Aberdeen's part. His son declares that the real consideration was the Oregon question. Had war resulted from that, a junction with Mexico would have been established and the offers of Mexico at once accepted.⁵⁹

As we might expect, the instructions which Buchanan sent October 17, 1845, to our consul at Monterey in California, T. O. Larkin, stressed the need of circumventing the purposes of the British Government.⁶⁰

Buchanan told Larkin that the interests of our commerce and our whale fisheries on the Pacific demanded on his part the greatest vigilance in discovering and defeating any attempts which might be made by foreign governments to acquire a control over California. In the contest between Mexico and California we could take no part unless the former should commence hostilities against the United States; but should California assert and maintain its independence, we should render all the kind offices in our power as a sister republic. Buchanan disclaimed any intention of using compulsion or improper influence to accomplish the acquisition of California, but said that the transfer of the province to Great Britain or any other European power, which would be resisted by the United States, could result in nothing but evil to the colonists under such dominion and would sow the seeds of future war, because immigration from the United States would soon render it impossible for any European power to hold this fine province in vassalage. Larkin was informed also that the President had appointed him confidential agent in California. He was told that Lieutenant Gillespie was immediately proceeding to Monterey and would probably reach Larkin before the dispatch. Gillespie had seen these instructions and would co-operate with Larkin as a confidential agent in carrying them into effect. There was no reference to any further or separate instructions sent by Gillespie. The same day, the necessary orders were given to Gillespie and also to Commander Sloat, in command of the squadron of the United States on the Pacific.⁶¹

Leaving Larkin's activities in California for discus-

sion in the next chapter, let us turn our attention to affairs in Mexico City in the latter part of 1845 at the time of the Slidell mission. Three topics stand out. First, Mexico strenuously, though unsuccessfully, pleaded with France and Great Britain for help against the United States. France turned a deaf ear. Lord Aberdeen, resolved not to fight without France, made the Mexican situation utterly subordinate to the question of Oregon, though, as we have seen, he did not hesitate to listen at length to various proposals of the Mexican minister to London, Murphy, and to make counter suggestions, with regard to the possibility of rendering to Mexico financial aid in return for some sort of concession in California. While the British attitude was not to encourage Mexico in plunging into war with the United States, it was inevitable that Mexico, feeling that England and the United States might come to blows over Oregon, should procrastinate in the vain hope that something might happen to save California.⁶²

Secondly, despite their reports that Mexico was willing to treat, our consuls had constantly to inform the State Department of Mexican preparations for war. Notwithstanding lack of adequate money, the Mexican army was, on paper at least, vastly larger than the regular army of the United States. Strange as it may seem, the Mexicans had a rather contemptuous attitude towards the United States and were confident that they could win; and in this belief they received some support from European sources.⁶³

In the third place, it must be remembered that Mexico had a very unstable government. Revolution had ejected Santa Anna, revolution was to eject his

successor. Slidell reached Mexico while President Herrera was still in power. His effort to get in touch with the Government was met with quibbling, and the refusal to receive him was placed principally upon the specious ground that as if nothing had happened, he had been appointed a full minister, instead of a special commissioner. On December 20, 1845, after the matter had been referred to the Council of State, Slidell was officially informed of his rejection, and withdrew to the city of Jalapa, not far from Vera Cruz.

About the middle of December General Paredes, supported by the Church, the army and the monarchists, revolted, charging the administration of Herrera, among other things, with "seeking to avoid a necessary and glorious war," and with negotiating the "ignominious loss of national integrity." Without bloodshed Herrera gave up the reins of government. Paredes became temporary President with the intention of affording Mexico a strong and honest government, but there could be no concessions to the United States; and when on March 1, 1846, Slidell, who had been instructed to wait and try his luck again, presented a letter to the new Minister of Relations, Castillo, in which he summarized what had taken place and asked to be received, the Council of State was once more consulted and replied in the negative. Thereupon Castillo, with the help of the Spanish minister, dispatched an offensive note rejecting the second American overture.⁶⁴

In his message of December 2, 1845, Polk reviewed the relations of the United States with Mexico. He described his orders for the defence of Texas, which were justified by the Mexican threats of war; pointed out

that Mexico had conceded the independence of Texas; and passed to the unsettled claims for the redress of injuries inflicted by Mexico on citizens of the United States, to the neglect of Mexico to meet its obligations, and to a mysterious failure of the agent of the United States to transmit properly the last two instalments that were supposed to have been paid. He described at length the appointment of Slidell on the basis of the consent of Mexico to renew diplomatic relations.

By February 17, 1846, Polk had presented to the Cabinet his determination, in case Mexico declined to receive Slidell or to pay the American claims, to withdraw the minister to one of our vessels of war at Vera Cruz and, with the assent of Congress, "to take redress into our own hands by aggressive measures."⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the information from Slidell and Black, which reached Washington January 12, 1846, to the effect that Mexico would probably reject our overtures, impelled the President to take the important step of ordering Taylor to advance from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande, but it was not until the 8th of March that this transfer of his troops began. Polk's order of January 13 has been the subject of violent criticism; but a good case can be made out for it on the ground that, as our Government did not concede the right of Mexico to the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, but on the contrary claimed that this belonged to Texas, and hence to the United States, it was the duty of the President to maintain an American occupation, even though the boundary might be adjusted; to say nothing of the desirability of defending Texas from Mexican inroads.⁶⁶

It then became known that Slidell had been definitely rejected and was on his way home. Polk decided to await the arrival of Slidell, and on May 8 Slidell appeared, expressing his belief that only force would redress the wrongs we had so long borne. It is clear, therefore, that the conference which Polk held with the Cabinet on the morning of the 9th of May brought only the final conclusion of what had been under discussion for months—the decision to exact reparation from Mexico. When Polk asked the opinion of each member of the Cabinet “whether I should make a message to Congress on Tuesday, and whether in that message I should recommend a declaration of war against Mexico,” all assented except Bancroft, who said, however, that if any act of hostility should be committed by the Mexican forces he was then in favour of immediate war. Buchanan, though “he would feel better satisfied” if the Mexican forces had committed an act of hostility, nevertheless “gave his assent to the measure.”⁶⁷

It was that very same night that the news arrived of the capture of two companies of dragoons by a part of the Mexican army which had crossed the Del Norte. The Cabinet was immediately summoned again, and the members now agreed with entire unanimity that a war message should be sent to Congress on the following Monday, May 11. “War exists,” was Polk’s summary, “and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself.” When the message was sent to Congress, the House of Representatives passed a bill declaring the existence of war, with only one half-hour of discussion. In the Senate there was more hesitation. Senator Benton, the powerful leader of the

Democrats, so violently opposed to Calhoun, now seemed to be sharing some of Calhoun's doubts. He remarked that in his opinion in the nineteenth century war should not be declared without full discussion, and Buchanan retorted that war already existed by the act of Mexico itself. Polk inferred from Benton's conversation that he did not think the territory of the United States extended west of the Nueces River. But finally, May 12, the Senate passed the bill with only two dissenting votes, and May 13 the bill received Polk's signature and a proclamation announcing the existence of war was immediately issued.⁶⁸

Polk's course in shifting his ground between May 9 and May 11 has been much condemned. But this should not be over-emphasized. In his war message Polk did not omit the graver accusations which the United States could bring against Mexico and particularly its threats of making war upon us. It is clear that the President would have recommended the use of force had there been no attack on our dragoons; and while many have shared the doubts which Calhoun expressed as to the wisdom of Polk's course, no one has convincingly pointed out the alternative which would have afforded a peaceful solution of the Mexican problem.

CHAPTER V

DIPLOMACY OF THE WAR

WITH MEXICO

ON the day on which Polk signed the War Act, Commodore Conner, in charge of the United States squadron off Vera Cruz, was authorized to permit the Mexican General Santa Anna to pass through the American blockade into Mexico. The reason for this action was the information submitted to Polk by one Colonel Atocha, a "Spanish gentleman"—really a former henchman of Santa Anna, now a naturalized citizen of the United States. Atocha had declared, in February 1846, that Santa Anna, if he were back in Mexico, would favour a treaty with the United States by which the Mexican debt might be met through the payment by the United States of a large sum for a cession by Mexico. This received some confirmation from the report of Lieutenant Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, who, early in June, was sent to Havana with a copy of the order to Conner, and was also instructed to get into touch with Santa Anna. Mackenzie reported a long conversation with the former President of Mexico and said that Santa Anna was repentant for his past errors and promised in the future to govern in the interest of the masses in Mexico and to reduce the wealth and power of the clergy. He was understood to be opposed to the establishment of a monarchy, and desired a friendly arrangement with the United States. He urged

that Taylor should occupy Saltillo and compel Paredes to fight.⁶⁹

But, as we shall see, Santa Anna no sooner reached Mexico than he pursued a different course.

The campaigns of the Mexican war lie outside the field of this study, except in so far as a bare outline of events may help to fix the chronology of our efforts to make peace. While General Taylor was on the Rio Grande, a fleet under Commodore Conner blockaded the Mexican ports. Taylor's successes at Monterey (September 1846), at Saltillo (November 1846) and at Buena Vista (February 22 and 23, 1847), aroused a popular enthusiasm which later was to make him President. Polk, however, while recognizing the bravery of the troops, could not overlook what he called the insubordination and blundering of Taylor, and, even before this, had determined to entrust farther advances to another general.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the long-established commercial relations which attached to the Santa Fe Trail from New Mexico to St. Louis, coupled with the hope of detaching from Mexico not only the ill-governed province of New Mexico, but possibly others of the northern provinces, had brought about the heroic march of Colonel Kearny overland to Santa Fe. That town, after some preliminary work of a quasi-diplomatic character on the part of the Kentucky trader, James Magoffin, was deserted by the Mexican Governor, Armijo. On August 18, 1846, it surrendered without a battle. The occupation of Santa Fe gave us New Mexico, and furnished a base for a land attack upon California.⁷¹

With reference to California, it is hard to say just

how much of a narrative of events belongs to a work on diplomatic history. Certainly we should not fail to take account of the activities of our consul Larkin, whom, the reader will recall, Polk had appointed special agent. Buchanan's instructions which Gillespie brought to Larkin (April 17, 1846) embodied Polk's alternative plan for the acquisition of California in case his first scheme—that of purchase through the mission of Slidell—should fail. This plan, as followed out by Larkin, was to conciliate the leading men of California, both naturalized Americans and native-born Mexicans, with the idea of setting up a government independent of Mexico. His course was obstructed by the prospect of a civil war between the northern and southern sections of Mexican California, of which Los Angeles and Monterey respectively were the most important places, and the leaders of which, Pico, the Governor, and Castro, were quarrelling.

Before Larkin's activities reached any definite fruition, however, the so-called Bear Flag uprising had taken place—the unauthorized and embarrassing raid of a few American landholders, hunters, and trappers in the Sacramento Valley in June 1846. The earlier historians of California, perhaps quite naturally, attributed to this an importance greater than it deserved. The most significant fact in connection with it was the presence at Monterey in California, at the end of January 1846, of Colonel John C. Frémont, who, in the spring of 1845, had started from St. Louis on his third expedition of exploration with the principal purpose of discovering the most practical route from the Mississippi to the Pacific. From Castro, Frémont received

permission to recruit men and horses in California, but the junction of Frémont with another part of his forces from which he had been divided, and the appearance of the united body of Americans near Monterey, alarmed Castro, as, indeed, such a discovery might very well do. After preparing to defend himself at Hawk's Peak, Frémont withdrew from his position and left for Oregon by way of the San Joaquin and Sacramento. Castro put forth a rhetorical proclamation against Frémont, March 8, 1846. It was while Frémont had gone to the north that Gillespie reached Monterey, from which place he hastened on to overtake Frémont and to convey to him a packet of letters from the latter's father-in-law, Senator Thomas H. Benton. Frémont afterwards asserted, probably incorrectly, that from these communications he was led to believe that he was expected by the Administration on his own initiative to forestall the possibility that California should slip into British hands.⁷² He returned to the Sacramento and gave his support to the Bear Flag Revolt. "How far he was actually responsible for fomenting the revolt," says one of the most careful students of California history, "is one of those disputed points upon which there is no possibility of agreement."⁷³ The result, however, was most unfortunate, for the Bear Flag affair aroused keen resentment on the part of the Californians and completely foiled Larkin's plan of independence. Castro and Pico, who had been at swords' points, drew together. What they might have accomplished against the American settlers is a matter of pure speculation. If the Bear Flag settlers had conquered, their leader, Ide, or Frémont himself, might

have played the role of Sam Houston in a new republic on the Pacific. Instead, California was caught up in the whirlwind of the war between Mexico and the United States. The military and naval actions on the Pacific coast, the crossing of the continent by Colonel Kearny, the "Flores" revolt of the Mexican Californians, and the re-establishment of American control in the so-called "Treaty of Cahuenga" followed in rapid succession.⁷⁴ With reference to our diplomacy, the most significant fact was the abstention of the British and French Governments from any attempts at intervention or interference.

When it appeared that, despite Taylor's success, the Mexican Government had no intention of negotiating for peace, the war feeling in the United States, at first so enthusiastic, began to be sobered. Taylor himself had suggested the idea of holding a defensive line far enough south to secure sufficient territory for an adequate indemnity and leaving it to Mexico to press offensive operations. This suggestion was received with no little favour in Washington, and among those who supported it were Calhoun, Buchanan, and, for a time, Polk himself. But public opinion came to demand a bolder plan, and it was decided to send General Scott to attack Vera Cruz. Perhaps not without some political purpose, as he was another Whig general serving under a Democratic administration, General Scott was given very large power, and full responsibility was thrown upon him.⁷⁵

Not only did Polk zealously endeavour to secure his ends without war with Mexico, but when fighting once began, he proposed peace at every possible opportunity. This desire for peace was stated in the war message of May 11, 1846. Again, on July 27, 1846, acting on inti-

mations from our consul in Mexico City, Buchanan addressed to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations a proposal to begin negotiations for a treaty.⁷⁶ The rejection of this overture was one manifestation of the change of heart on the part of Santa Anna, who had by this time reached Mexico. Equally unsuccessful as a move towards peace was Polk's request in August 1846 for an appropriation of \$2,000,000, which, though the appropriation was not granted, had the important result of calling forth the Wilmot Proviso.⁷⁷ A second attempt, for \$3,000,000, was successfully carried, March 3, 1847; but this had the ill effect of persuading many in Mexico that we were preparing to bribe their officials, and resulted, therefore, in an assumption of unapproachableness on the part of the Mexican Government.⁷⁸ In November, Buchanan had employed as a confidential agent Moses Y. Beach, proprietor and editor of the *New York Sun*, who, with his secretary, Mrs. Storms, went to Mexico to further his interest in a project of a canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as well as a plan for a national bank. Beach was given no diplomatic powers: but in the light of what happened later to Trist, it is interesting to find that Polk wrote in his Diary: "It will be a good joke if he should assume the authority and take the whole country by surprise and make a treaty," and added that if he should do so, and it was a good one, he would submit it to the Senate for ratification. Beach actually made no treaty, but on his return gave Polk valuable information.⁷⁹ Again, January 18, 1847, a message was entrusted to General Atocha, who had been expelled again from Mexico City, this time by Santa Anna, but who gave the impression

that he was in Santa Anna's confidence. It was planned to have commissioners of the two countries meet at Jalapa, in Mexico, or at Havana. Again Polk's hope was disappointed. Atocha, expelled a third time, brought back an ugly note in which the Mexican Government refused to treat until the Mexican territory and waters were evacuated by the United States Army and Navy.⁸⁰

After the news of the victory at Buena Vista and of Scott's success, March 29, 1847, at Vera Cruz had been received, Polk decided, on April 10, to appoint "a commissioner vested with Plenipotentiary powers, who should attend the headquarters of the army ready to take advantage of circumstances, as they might arise to negotiate for peace." Polk wanted to appoint Buchanan, but realized that he could not be spared, and the person selected, on the recommendation of Buchanan, was the chief clerk in the State Department, Nicholas P. Trist, a Virginian with important family and political connections. The project of a treaty which, with his instructions, Trist received April 15, 1847, followed the general lines of the instructions to Slidell. A new factor that now appeared was the desire to purchase a right of transit and transportation across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico.⁸¹

Trist's arrival in Mexico was followed by his serious illness, and by a violent quarrel with Scott, who bitterly resented Trist's interference. But partly through the kindly mediation of Bankhead and Thornton, of the British Legation in Mexico, Trist and Scott were reconciled. Polk's disgust when he learned of the quarrel was further increased when it became known that Trist and Scott had agreed upon a scheme of bribing Mexican

officials. For this the commissioner and the General were censured by Secretaries Buchanan and Marcy respectively.

After complicated quarrels and intrigues between the different factions in Mexico, and between the Government and Santa Anna, the demand which Scott made after the battle of Churubusco for the surrender of Mexico City was followed by an offer to negotiate, but nothing was accomplished except to get Trist face to face with the Mexican commissioners. The proposals of the Mexican Government for a treaty were absurd in their ignoring of the actual condition of things; and even when modified the terms were such that Trist rejected them.⁸²

The entry, September 14, of the American troops into the City of Mexico brought destruction to the Mexican Government. On September 16, Santa Anna, resigning the Presidency, undertook to continue hostilities wherever it was possible to do so. Instead of the President, a triumvirate was to exercise the executive power, but the constitutionality or legality of this action of Santa Anna's was open to serious doubt. Indeed, there was governmental chaos, and danger that the Mexican federal state would break up into its component states. To avoid this catastrophe, Peña y Peña patriotically undertook to form a Government, and to him rallied Herrera and others of the best men. In October, this Government moved to Querétaro. With remarkable decision, Peña disregarded the protests of Santa Anna, and instructed him to give up his troops and submit to a military trial. A brush at Huamantla completed the ruin of Santa Anna's military prestige, and he retired from his command. In January 1848 he asked permission

to leave the country, and in April departed, it was understood, for Venezuela.⁸³ In October, despite the fall of Santa Anna and the anarchy which threatened Mexico, there was still felt in many quarters doubt as to the probability of peace, and it seemed likely that there would be a long occupation of Mexico by our troops. This might involve even the setting up of a Government with which to make peace. But Peña y Peña and the Moderado party determined to treat, and found Trist willing to meet with the Mexican commissioners. The Mexican Congress which met November 2, 1847, supported the move for peace, and this was favoured also by the election as President, for the interim, of Anaya. Hardly had this taken place when Trist received instructions from Buchanan, which bore date of September 25, recalling him. Trist intended to inform the Mexican authorities of the ending of his mission, but as he could not leave for some time through lack of military escort, time was given for consideration. Peña, Minister of Relations under Anaya, heard with alarm of Trist's recall, and through Thornton, the British chargé, pressed Trist to take up the negotiation which had been arranged. Encouraged by the support of Thornton and of General Scott, Trist made his decision December 3, and in defiance of his instructions, proceeded to negotiate with the Mexicans. The matter was long drawn out, and when the Mexicans asked for \$30,000,000 as the financial consideration for the cessions which we demanded, and Trist would give but \$15,000,000, such an impasse was reached, that, January 29, 1848, Trist declared the negotiation ended. It was revived and Doyle, the British chargé, helped to frighten

the commissioners into signing, on February 2, at Guadalupe Hidalgo, the treaty which ended the Mexican War.⁸⁴

By the second article, the treaty arranged for a suspension of hostilities. This was accomplished within a month. Meanwhile, the treaty was hurried to Washington, where it arrived February 19, and found anything but a warm welcome. The President was thoroughly indignant at the course of Trist, and the Cabinet was at first divided as to the propriety of submitting the treaty to the Senate.⁸⁵

On February 22, Polk, having made his decision, sent the treaty to the Senate with a recommendation for ratification. An adjournment was caused in both houses through the paralytical attack which overtook that day the venerable ex-President John Quincy Adams. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, having in view the procedure of Trist, was prepared to report the treaty unfavourably, but on Polk's warning that it was the treaty and not Trist's conduct that was before it, the committee reversed its decision and reported the treaty without recommendation. The final vote, March 10, 1845, resulted in the ratification of the treaty by a vote of 38 to 14.

Several amendments were made to the treaty. The tenth article, that which had to do with Mexican land titles, was eliminated, as were the provision for security of the Roman Catholic Church in the required territory, contained in Article IX, and also the words by which Trist had expanded the statement of the promise of citizenship to the Mexicans who should become Americans. Other amendments dealt chiefly with details.⁸⁶

The terms of the treaty were in many respects like those which had been embodied in the project first given to Trist. Article V traced the boundary from the mouth of the Rio Grande, up the middle of that river to the point where it struck the southern boundary of New Mexico; thence along the southern boundary of New Mexico "(which runs north of the town called Paso)" to its western termination; thence northward along the western line of New Mexico to the intersection with the first branch of the river Gila, or to the point on the line nearest to such branch, and thence in a direct line to the same; thence down the Gila to the Rio Colorado; thence across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between upper and lower California to the Pacific Ocean.⁸⁷ Provision was made for a joint commission, which, within a year after the exchange of ratifications, should meet at San Diego and mark the whole boundary. Out of the difficulties which attached to this task was later to develop one of the reasons for the Gadsden treaty of 1853. Another reason for that treaty, the desire for a railroad route, had been the basis for a later instruction to Trist, but this failed to be realized in the treaty which he made. In Article VI, however, which provided for the people of the United States free navigation of the Gulf of California and the Colorado below its confluence with the Gila, arrangement was made for a future agreement between the two Governments with regard to any "road, canal or railway" which should follow the course of the Gila. By Article VII the navigation of the Gila and the lower Rio Grande was to be common to the citizens of both countries.

It is necessary to mention, in addition, Article XI, a

source of much trouble later, by which the United States undertook to restrain the Indians in the ceded territory to the same extent that it did in its own. This was intended for the protection of Mexico. Article XXII laid down certain rules in case of a future war, characterized by the introduction of humanitarian principles. Article XXI was noteworthy as providing definitely for arbitration in the case of disagreement, either in the interpretation of the treaty or any other particular concerning the political or commercial relations of the two nations. Article XII bound the United States to pay to Mexico \$15,000,000—a sum less than the highest which Polk had authorized, in annual instalments of \$3,000,000, with interest at six per cent. This article, like that which concerned the boundary and that which had to do with the Indians, became the source of discussion later.⁸⁸

To explain the amendments made by the Senate and to complete the exchange of ratifications, Polk appointed Senator Sevier, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Attorney-General, Nathan Clifford. The difficulty of the commissioners was to find a government in Mexico. It had been impossible to get a quorum in the Mexican Congress, and the Mexican factions, distrusting each other, tried to avoid responsibility. But the President, Peña y Peña, and the Ministers of War and of Foreign Affairs brought out the advantageous side of the treaty and the desperate state of the country, and finally the Mexican deputies and Senate both gave their approval. On May 30, 1848, ratifications were exchanged and the stipulated \$3,000,000 paid down.⁸⁹

CHAPTER VI

THE "POLK DOCTRINE"; EXPANSIONIST IDEAS; SYMPATHY WITH THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS

I

AT the beginning of our discussion of the Oregon negotiation, the reader was reminded of the resentment against Great Britain and France which had been aroused by the interference of those powers in Texas, by Guizot's equivocation to King, and by the discovery of the subterfuge of Elliot. It is hardly necessary to add that this resentment was augmented by the news of the activities of British agents in California, even though we now know from archival research that at the moment the British Government itself was authorizing nothing that could hurt the United States. There was another reason for indignation, this time against the Government of France, a matter to which little attention has been given, and which must now be considered.

In June 1845, M. Guizot, after a temporary retirement on account of ill health, returned to his place in the French Chamber of Deputies. One of the speakers of the Opposition shortly thereafter declared that France was pledged to support England in war with the United States to prevent the annexation of Texas, and had secured from England in return the treaty—which later will be duly noted—abrogating the right of search.

Guizot replied that there was no connection between these two matters; France was in favour of the independence of Texas, but if Texas wished to renounce its independence and be incorporated in the United States, France had nothing to say or do with it. Guizot, then passing to a "higher consideration," said that France had an interest in the duration of the independent states of America and in preserving the equilibrium of the forces which balanced each other in this part of the world. There were in America three great powers: the United States, England, and the states of Spanish origin. France was not an American power. She had interests in America, but was not present upon its soil. French interest was that the independent states should retain their independence, that the balance of the great powers among which America was divided should continue, and that no one should become preponderant.⁹⁰

Let us now turn to Polk's first annual message, which the President submitted December 2, 1845.⁹¹ We have seen that in this message Texas and Oregon came first. Concluding a somewhat triumphant account of the accomplishment of annexation, the President reminded Congress that "the result was achieved in despite of the diplomatic interference of European monarchies. . . . Even France, the country which had been our ancient ally" took part in the effort to prevent annexation. "From this example," Polk continued, "European Governments may learn how vain diplomatic arts and intrigues must ever prove upon this continent against that system of self-government which seems natural to our soil, and which will ever resist foreign interference."

This was not enough. After he had discussed our

relations with Mexico and with Great Britain, Polk returned to the charge. The growth of the United States was attracting the attention of the powers of Europe, and lately "the doctrine has been broached, in some of them, of a 'balance of power' on this continent to check our advancement." "The United States," said the President with dignity, "sincerely desirous of preserving relations of good understanding with all nations, can not in silence permit any European interference on the North American continent, and should any such interference be attempted will be ready to resist it at any and all hazards."

This the President elaborated in a lengthy paragraph, the substance of which was that the United States had not interfered in the relations between other governments, and claimed a like exemption on this continent from European interference. The American system of government was entirely different from any in Europe. The "balance of power" sought by European sovereigns lest any one of them might become too powerful for the rest, could never be permitted to have any application on the continent of North America, and especially to the United States.

The President was thus brought to the conclusion that it was a proper occasion to "reiterate and reaffirm the principle avowed by Mr. Monroe" and to announce to the world as our settled policy, "that no future European colony or dominion shall, with our consent, be planted or established on any part of the North American continent."

It has been pointed out that the declaration of Polk was stronger than that originally put forth by Monroe

in that the President first added to "colony" the word "dominion," and secondly now alluded to "any interference" from abroad; and more limited than Monroe's in that Polk's views included only the North American continent: and the name "Polk Doctrine" has been applied to this restatement.⁹²

That he "was strongly inclined to reaffirm Mr. Monroe's doctrine, against permitting foreign colonization, at least as far as this continent was concerned," Polk had declared to Senator Benton several weeks before the annual message of 1845: and he had added that in so doing he "had California and the fine bay of San Francisco as much in view as Oregon." Benton, acquiescing, cited as an analogy our historic attitude towards Cuba.⁹³ Of Polk's decision to limit his warning to North America, our account of our diplomacy in South America will give a sufficient explanation. What the President stressed at greatest length, his hostility to "any interference," was undoubtedly primarily a defiance to the expression of European interest in America voiced by Guizot. In a broader sense, it becomes the key-note of the policy of his Administration.

Particularly distasteful, and therefore perhaps receiving greater attention than it deserved, was the plan which was reported as under contemplation abroad to establish a monarchy in Mexico—a plan which many years later reached its ultimate sorrowful experiment in the Maximilian affair. This suggestion received the support of the London *Times* and was finally interpreted by Buchanan in his instructions to Slidell as designed to accomplish the placing of the Spanish Prince Henry on the Mexican throne. Such a scheme,

Buchanan said, "would be resisted by all the power of the United States."⁹⁴ While there was no serious effort in this direction made by England or France, the existence of a monarchist party in Mexico had to be reckoned with. Of a similar and equally futile idea in connection with Cuba, Porto Rico and Spanish Santo Domingo, and of another warning addressed by Polk to Europe, we shall hear again, when we consider the plans of General Flores in Latin America.

II

As the course of the Mexican War brought victory after victory to the armies of the United States, there developed, as was to be expected, a strong sentiment for the retention of what had been conquered and a willingness to find a justification therefor in the dictates of a wise Providence. The annexation of Texas and the settlement of the Oregon controversy so favourably to the United States, even though the extremists in this case were disappointed, had contributed to start this feeling. It was in the summer of 1845, apparently, that the phrase "manifest destiny" was added to our political vocabulary.⁹⁵

In the northern provinces of Mexico, in Coahuila, Tamaulipas and Nuevo León, a separatist tendency had developed even before the loss of Texas; and as early as 1840 an attempt had been made to establish a "República de Río Grande." This idea appeared again about the time of the Slidell mission, and again when Taylor's army was at Corpus Christi. When, in the treaty at the end of the war, the Rio Grande was adopted as the

boundary, another such project was set on foot, but except for a local rising at Tampico in September 1848, the plan utterly failed.⁹⁶ When Don Hilario de Mesa, who came from Tamaulipas in the interest of the separatists, visited Washington in November 1846, Buchanan was ready to promise the guarantees of independence which were desired on the part of the United States, but the President differed with the Secretary and overruled him.⁹⁷ A year later, moved, Polk thought, by considerations connected with his presidential aspirations, Buchanan had enlarged his views, and wanted to annex the whole region west of the Sierra Madre Mountains, while R. J. Walker, a consistent expansionist, was "for taking the whole of Mexico"; but Polk firmly put his foot down and said that he was not prepared to go to that extent: he had already declared that he did not contemplate the conquest of Mexico.⁹⁸

Still more important was the temptation which was offered to enter upon a course of expansion by taking advantage of the request for assistance which came from the Mexican state of Yucatan. After requesting some favours in November 1847, the agent of Yucatan, Don Justo Sierra, presented to Polk, March 7, 1848, an appeal for help against a terrible rising of the Indians which had threatened to exterminate the whites. The Government of Yucatan offered to surrender the dominion and sovereignty of that state to the United States. What aroused Polk was the suggestion that similar offers had been made to Great Britain and Spain. Polk said "we could never agree to see Yucatan pass into the hands of a foreign monarchy," but the power of protection could only be granted by Congress.⁹⁹

After some altercation in the Cabinet in which Buchanan and Walker took opposite views, Polk sent to Congress, April 29, a brief message. This was the occasion for a lengthy discussion in the Senate, May 4. The debate naturally took a wide turn, covering Maine, Oregon, Texas, California, and Central and South America and Cuba, with much complaint at the interference of Great Britain.

Now Hannegan charged England with the design to secure the most practicable route for an artificial means of communication between the two oceans. Having seized Yucatan, England would next take Cuba. Foote agreed with Hannegan.¹⁰⁰ Again Calhoun was in opposition and seized the occasion to make what was one of his most interesting speeches, in that he discussed the Monroe Doctrine. He was now the only survivor of Monroe's Cabinet and came forth in that role with an emphatic declaration that the Monroe Doctrine had not ever been militant.¹⁰¹

In the proposal to occupy Yucatan Professor Dodd is inclined to see an effort to reopen the Mexican War, undertaken by the expansionists who were disappointed by the terms of the Guadalupe treaty and thought that in the prostration of Europe by the wars of 1848 there was an opportunity for expansion on the part of the United States without European intervention. Some indications that this may have been the case may be seen in the speeches that were made, but it is quite certain that Polk did not intend to repudiate the treaty.¹⁰²

In our discussion of the status of Cuba during the Secretaryship of Calhoun, the insurrection of the blacks

formed the principal topic. But at the end of his service as Secretary of State, Calhoun was busy with the endeavour to secure a fair trial for those Americans who were seized by the Government in Cuba. Buchanan's first duty was to protest against the sudden and unjust annulment of a decree which the Government in Cuba had issued in October 1844, whereby, to relieve the distress which arose from a recent hurricane, lumber and foodstuffs had been allowed to come in, duty free.¹⁰³

In May 1846, as the Mexican War broke out, it was rumoured that Mexican privateers might be fitted out in Cuba and Porto Rico, but the attitude of Spain was in general one of complete neutrality, and the efforts of Mexico to begin privateering had little result. Spain was at the time disposed to offer mediation, but this was not encouraged.¹⁰⁴

More interesting were the developments of the latter part of the Polk Administration. In July 1847, Lord George Bentinck declared in the House of Commons that if no other course proved successful in securing the payment of the debt of £46,000,000 sterling owed to British subjects by Spain, it was the duty of Great Britain to resort to war; and he pointed to Cuba and to Porto Rico as furnishing in their revenues means for the payment of both interest and principal. Palmerston, speaking for the Government, thought the suggested course to be not expedient at the time, but said that it was a question of expediency merely, and not of power. Here, then, was something definite—an expression that ran counter to our policy, as old as the days of Jefferson and Madison, which demanded that Cuba be left alone by the powers of Europe.¹⁰⁵

In Cuba itself, meanwhile, there was being hatched the plot for an insurrection, of which the leader was Narciso López. When he fled to New York in July 1848, López found newspapers published in that city and in New Orleans to promote revolution in the island, financed by an organization in Havana. Concerning the approaches made to Jefferson Davis and to Robert E. Lee, our information is scanty, but it is certain that many of the officers returning from the Mexican War saw in Cuba a new world to conquer, and felt a call not merely of adventure but of philanthropy in freeing the last of the Spanish colonies. This feeling was, no doubt, greatly enhanced by the American sympathy with the European revolutions of 1848. In the earlier phases this desire for Cuba was not limited to the South or to the interest of slavery. It was rather a part of the expansionist feeling we have already noted, increased by the old hostility towards Great Britain. Undoubtedly, the southerners, however, were impressed with the terrible results which they feared would follow a servile war in Cuba, and their interest in the freedom of the island was modified by a dislike of any thought of emancipation. Of the prospect of a civil war and the desire of the creoles in Cuba for annexation to the United States, Buchanan was informed by Campbell, our consul in Havana, in May 1848, and information which Campbell sent to R. J. Walker to the same effect reached Polk June 1.¹⁰⁶

But already, three weeks before, the purchase of Cuba by the United States had been urged upon Polk, not, be it noted, by the extreme southerners, but by one John L. O'Sullivan, of New York, editor, in 1845, of the New

York *Morning News*, and also of the *Democratic Review*, and a "Barnburner" Democrat. O'Sullivan was introduced to Polk by Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois. Though he withheld from his visitors any expression of opinion, the President wrote in his Diary that he was desirous of purchasing Cuba and making it one of the states of the Union. Throughout the end of May and the early part of June this matter of purchasing Cuba was much discussed. Buchanan opposed the scheme, fearing the political effect of it on the prospects of the Democratic party at the next election. He considered this, said Polk, "the greatest and most important question that had ever been submitted to my Cabinet."¹⁰⁷

At length it was decided to make an offer of purchase and Buchanan, albeit unwillingly, drew up a long instruction to our minister, Romulus M. Saunders, who had now succeeded Washington Irving at Madrid. Buchanan began with a statement of the traditional American position—that we were contented to have the island belong to Spain, but that it should never become the property of any other power. He then charged Great Britain with designs upon Cuba. Buchanan was no less clear than Calhoun that England's policy was "to seize upon every valuable commercial point throughout the world whenever circumstances have placed this in her power." It was in the Caribbean that Buchanan now saw evidence of British aggression, particularly in regard to Central America. Buchanan did not fail to note the speech of Bentinck. Saunders was to disclaim to Spain any support of the revolutionists on our part. Saunders was told to offer confidentially \$100,000,000 in ten equal annual instalments.¹⁰⁸

The effort was a vain one, for Spain refused to sell, and the foreign minister declared that in his opinion the Spanish people, "sooner than see the Island transferred to any power, . . . would prefer seeing it sunk in the ocean."¹⁰⁹ The New York *Herald* published an account of the negotiations. In a friendly interchange of letters with his successor, Clayton, Buchanan admitted that "a more skilful agent might have been selected to conduct the negotiations in Spain, as our present minister speaks no language except English, and even this he sometimes murders."¹¹⁰

If Spain refused to sell Cuba, Sweden was willing to part with its island of Saint Bartholomew, in the West Indies. This Buchanan declined, saying, for the President, that, "the acquisition of distant insular possessions for Colonial dependencies has never been deemed desirable or expedient by the United States." This was in the summer of 1845.¹¹¹

III

The Mexican War had just been brought to a successful close when the people of the United States received news of the overthrow of the French monarchy in the revolution of February 1848. The successful conclusion of the Oregon treaty had permitted the release of W. R. King from a mission which was endangering his health: and Polk, after the nomination of Charles J. Ingersoll had been rejected,¹¹² appointed to the French mission, March 3, 1847, Richard Rush of Pennsylvania, who reached his post in July. On February 28, 1848, Rush, contrary to the advice of the British ambassador,

took the decided step of practically acknowledging the French Republic on his own initiative without instructions from his Government. So enthusiastic was the attitude of the Polk Administration, however, that this unusual course was approved, and Buchanan wrote that the President would have regretted if the representative of any other nation had preceded Rush in this good work. Both houses of Congress finally passed a joint resolution felicitating the French people, but a controversy sinister for the future arose when amendments were offered which congratulated the French on the recent abolition of slavery in their colonies. In the Senate, Calhoun was the chief dissenter, correctly foreseeing that the Republic would be but transitory. For the enthusiasm in this country reasons have been found in the appreciation by our people of the moderation and comparative bloodlessness of the Revolution, the remembrance of the aid given to the United States during the American Revolution, and the pleasure at the fall of a European monarchy and the substitution therefor of a republic which, it was hoped, would be like our own. To these may be added, on the part of those who knew the inside history of our diplomatic experience of the last few years, the resentment which the double-dealing of Louis Philippe and Guizot had caused. This early enthusiasm was soon dampened by the exhibition on the part of the Republic of socialistic tendencies, and, for the South, by the decree which abolished slavery in the French colonies.¹¹³

As the Revolution of 1848 developed in Germany, Donelson's dispatches brought to the Secretary of State graphic accounts of what happened in Berlin. Donelson

had thought the Germans would not "like to make a reform by means of a Revolution" and would not be much affected by what was happening in France. Donelson described in detail the movement toward a German confederation. When the Parliament at Frankfort undertook to create a Provisional Executive Department for all the German states, Donelson was sent to Frankfort with authority to recognize such a government if it were in successful operation. A little later it was decided to establish a separate mission to the federal Government of Germany, and August 5 Polk nominated Donelson to this mission. Donelson, while obeying the injunction not to antagonize the Prussian Government or take any part in the movements for reform, cordially wished that a constitution might be established for all Germany which would render the nation great and powerful. He foresaw, however, the difficulties which the German Parliament would encounter from the reluctance of the sovereigns of the several states to surrender their prerogative.

It was observed that the federal Government, if successful, might offer a still wider field for commercial reciprocity, but the effort to negotiate a treaty was abandoned, although Baron Roenne had been received by Polk as envoy of the German Empire after Gerolt, the Prussian minister, had returned to Europe.¹¹⁴

Meanwhile, at Washington, Roenne was engaged in a curious endeavour. During an armistice which interrupted the war between Prussia, backed by the Frankfort Parliament, and the Government of Denmark over the Schleswig-Holstein question, Prussia sought the assistance of the United States in establish-

ing a navy. Roenne had requested of Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, detailed information as to our laws and regulations for the administration of the navy, with plans of navy yards, dry docks, etc., drafts of guns and gun carriages, and books on naval subjects. When this request in a large part was granted, Roenne proceeded to press for the appointment of a United States naval officer to assist in purchasing, arming and equipping a steam frigate in the United States and later to take her to Bremerhaven, but before Polk left office the Administration had so far changed its opinion as to inform Roenne that the United States could not further comply with the German desires. The matter of the German steamer went over into the Taylor Administration.¹¹⁵

Shortly after Buchanan's letter of March 31, 1848, to Rush, in which he approved the course of our minister in Paris and expressed sympathy with the ideals of the French Revolution, the Secretary gave instructions to Jacob L. Martin, who had been appointed chargé d'affaires to the Papal States, our first diplomatic representative accredited to that Government. Warning Martin to avoid any religious interpretation of his mission, the Secretary passed to an approval of the reforming course pursued by the Pope. He hoped that the reform spirit would lead to a more liberal commercial policy. As early as June 1, 1848, the Government had been privately informed by Nicholas Brown, our consul at Rome, of the desire on the part of the Papal Government that the United States should have a diplomatic representative at the Papal Court. Unfortunately, Martin died, and when Lewis Cass, Jr., was sent to

succeed Martin as chargé, the Papal Government had been overthrown. Therefore, Cass was instructed to proceed to Rome and report to the Department of State conditions there, but to withhold his letter of credence until it could be determined to what Government it could be presented. It is not without interest to read the comment on this situation of the brilliant Margaret Fuller, who wrote "from barricaded Rome," praising Rush for his prompt recognition of the French Provisional Government and expressing the opinion that "had Mr. Cass been empowered to do the same, our country would have acted nobly, and all that is most truly American in America would have spoken to sustain the sickened hopes of European democracy."¹¹⁶

CHAPTER VII

LATIN AMERICA

I

TO New Granada Buchanan sent, in place of the former incumbent, Blackford, Benjamin A. Bidlack, who was instructed, June 23, 1845, to use his influence with the Government of New Granada to prevent the granting to any other nation of privileges with reference to an inter-oceanic canal which might prove injurious to the United States and to say that the information which had been received from the Government of New Granada concerning the encroachment of Great Britain on the Mosquito Shore was highly interesting to us, although no application of the Government of New Granada had been received.¹¹⁷

As the commercial treaty which Blackford negotiated was not approved by the Senate, Bidlack concluded another, which, after some delay, was ratified in June 1848. Writing on this subject March 25, 1847, Buchanan explained that the reason for the Senate's delay was the expectation that the thirty-fifth article of the treaty, by which the United States guaranteed to New Granada the neutrality of the isthmus, would have caused a protracted debate.¹¹⁸ This article Polk defended at considerable length in a message of February 10, 1847. Further interesting light on the New Granada treaty is to be derived from the letters interchanged between Buchanan and Senator W. R. King in May 1850, at

the time when the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was under discussion. In support of his criticism of the joint guaranty with Great Britain which the Clayton-Bulwer treaty established, Buchanan wrote: "The question was well and carefully considered by Mr. Polk's cabinet, at the time of the New Granada treaty, and we determined that whilst we would use our good offices, if necessary, to prevail upon Great Britain to enter into a similar Treaty to our own with New Granada, we would not ourselves become a party to any Treaty whatever with G. B. relating to or connected with territory on any part of this North American continent."¹¹⁹

Of the activities of Elisha Hise, sent as chargé to Guatemala, a sufficient account is given in the next volume; here it is to be noted only that Buchanan informed him, June 3, 1848, that our Government had not yet determined what course it would pursue in regard to the British encroachments in Central America. He instructed Hise to advise the Central American states to strengthen their situation by a return to a federal union and declared "the independence, as well as the interests of the Nations on this continent require that they should maintain an American system of policy entirely distinct from that which prevails in Europe."¹²⁰

II

In 1847 it became known that General Juan José Flores, who had twice been President of Ecuador, and in 1845 had been displaced by a revolution, was organizing in Spain a military expedition for the purpose of reconquering some of the former Spanish colonies in the in-

terest of the mother country.¹²¹ The danger had been considered threatening enough for Peru to call a congress at Lima, to which New Granada, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile sent representatives. The congress held twenty sessions from December 11, 1847 to March 1, 1848, and on February 8 the contracting powers united in a treaty of confederation and a treaty of commerce. In the treaty of confederation the contracting powers combined for mutual protection against the attack or intervention of a foreign government, or "insult or grave offence" therefrom without apology, or invasion by "adventurers or unauthorized persons." The tone adopted by the congress was strongly opposed to a scheme "to establish Monarchies in America," and in this respect, in an interesting way, suggests both the anti-monarchical spirit in the United States and the revolutionary wave that was soon to sweep Europe.

General Flores was prevented from accomplishing his end, chiefly by the refusal of Great Britain to allow the departure of the steamship which he had contracted for. The delegates of the congress took no further action than to point to the obligations laid upon the contracting powers by the treaty, if occasion should arise for resistance.¹²²

The United States did not participate in this congress of the Pacific states of South America, doubtless because the Government was then engaged in the midst of the war with Mexico. Buchanan explained that the United States had "watched with intense anxiety the origin and progress of the intended expedition of Flores"—and that the Spanish Government had gone so far as

to send a disclaimer of any connection with Flores. To both Ecuador and Peru the Secretary of State wrote warmly, assuring them of the interest of the United States in the situation. Our minister to Ecuador, Van Brugh Livingston, was instructed to say that:

“the intervention or dictation, direct or indirect, of European Governments in the affairs of the Independent States of the American Hemisphere will never be viewed with indifference by the government of the United States. On the contrary, all the moral means, at least, within their power, shall, upon every occasion be employed to discourage and arrest such interference.”¹²³

In Santo Domingo, the disturbances which had broken out in the regime of Upshur and Calhoun at the Department of State continued, and the spokesman in Washington of the revolutionists continued to press without success for recognition. The special agent, Hogan, whom Calhoun had sent to the island to report on the situation and the capacity of the people and the Government for independence from Haiti, now returned and his report, favourable to recognition, was presented to the Senate. The plea for recognition received the support of the ex-Secretary, who went so far as to ask ex-President Tyler to press the matter on Polk. This Tyler declined to do, but he expressed his conviction that “the experiment which the blacks have made of governing themselves has resulted in bloodshed and anarchy, and the most fertile Island in the world is almost converted into a waste.”¹²⁴ In 1848 the U.S.S.

Saratoga was sent on a mission to Aux Cayes, Haiti, with results which Buchanan considered favourable.¹²⁵

The action of the French Government, in abolishing slavery in the French West Indies, brought a curious paper to Buchanan's desk. Some inhabitants of Guadeloupe, August 29, 1848, addressed a petition to President Polk, stating that they were "reduced to painful circumstances by the freedom of the Slave population," and asking for a grant of land in the United States. Buchanan instructed our consul at Guadeloupe, September 30, 1848, to state that only Congress could give the desired aid, but that the petitioners could be assured of a cordial welcome, comfort and independence.¹²⁶

III

We must now advert to the stormy career of Henry A. Wise, United States minister to Brazil. In January 1845, the American brig *Porpoise*, which had entered the harbour of Rio, was suspected of being a slave ship, and by the authority of Commodore Turner some United States marines were placed on board, to guard the vessel and some of the crew. Although Wise thought that this action had received the assent of the Brazilian Government, a Brazilian force was sent to release the vessel and the persons on board from the United States guard. A serious clash was threatened but averted by an arrangement between the Brazilian authorities and Commodore Turner. Against this violation of its sovereignty over its territorial waters, the Brazilian Government protested to that of the United States, but later expressed the desire that "the whole subject might be

buried in oblivion." Wise was reproved in a kindly way by the Secretary of State, who commended his zeal against the odious and infamous slave trade, but censured him for carrying too far his attempt at extradition. The United States, Secretary Buchanan said, tolerated no right of extradition and had only two treaties for this purpose at that time. It recognized the jurisdiction of the nation on which a requisition was made over the person of the fugitive until the very moment of the final surrender.¹²⁷

Unfortunately, Wise's rashness led to another, larger, incident, from the effects of which the Brazilian Government did not recover. Two of a party of sailors of the United States warship *Columbia* threatened a fight with each other in the streets of Rio, and Lieutenant Davis, of the United States Navy, tried to separate them. The local police took officer and men to the Imperial prison. Captain Rousseau, of the *Columbia*, appealed to Wise, as representative of the United States. The impetuous minister was highly indignant. He demanded the release of the prisoners, which was finally granted, but after a very peremptory tone on Wise's part which had grievously offended the Brazilian authorities.

To make matters worse, Wise did not appear at court for the celebration of the baptism of one of the Imperial children, nor again for the festivities of the Emperor's birthday. Commodore Rousseau on his part failed to fire the proper salute. The irritated Brazilian ministers attributed this lack of courtesy to Wise, and requested his recall. Buchanan firmly refused to condemn Wise by formally recalling him. He informed the Government of Brazil that Wise had asked for his recall before the

Davis affair and the President had determined to accede to his request.¹²⁸ Buchanan skilfully arranged with the Brazilian minister, Lisboa, what the latter thought an honourable adjustment of the Davis affair, but this was not accepted by the Brazilian Government and Lisboa was recalled. Leal, who acted as chargé *ad interim*, at Washington, was directed, May 31, 1847, to insist upon reparation for Davis's acts of the preceding October, a declaration by the Government of the United States of disapproval of Wise's conduct, and a formal recall of the obnoxious minister.

In what Polk considered an able note, Buchanan answered all the Brazilian points, and, August 31, 1847, instructed Tod, Wise's successor at Rio, that if the Brazilian Government refused to receive him, he was to return to the United States. Buchanan considered the whole affair annoying, for if diplomatic relations should be suspended, it might be necessary for an American squadron to demand satisfaction of Brazil, as well as payment of the long deferred claims of our citizens, and this would cause much irritation. Tod was, therefore, to use all honourable efforts to ensure his reception by the Brazilian Government. In November, Buchanan learned that Tod had been received, and that Brazil would shortly appoint a minister to the United States.¹²⁹ In that same month another evidence of good relations appeared when Polk issued a reciprocity proclamation in favour of Brazil, under the act of May 24, 1828.¹³⁰

Quite as important as the activities of Wise in Brazil, and hardly more satisfactory in the outcome, were the developments of American foreign policy which centred in the countries on the La Plata River. We

have referred in the previous sketch of Secretary Calhoun to the appointment of William Brent to be chargé at Buenos Aires, and to the mistaken zeal of Captain Voorhees. We must be content with a mere sketch of the position of the United States. When Rosas undertook to enforce a rigid blockade, in January 1845, it soon developed that the British and French authorities had decided to pay no attention thereto. As to the policy to be pursued by vessels of the United States, a sharp difference developed between Brent, who advised minute observance of the blockade, and Captain Pendergrast, of the U.S.S. *Boston*, who insisted that the blockade must be made effective against all powers if the vessels of the United States were to be stopped. The matter was referred to Washington, and the Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft, finally supported Brent's position, though he spoke in warm terms of the patriotic intentions of the naval officers.¹³¹

The next phase related to the decision of Great Britain and France, acting in concert, to intervene to stop the war on the La Plata. The allied squadron blockaded, first, the ports of Uruguay friendly to Rosas, and in September 1845, the ports of the province of Buenos Aires itself. As to the latter blockade—that put into effect by the allies against Buenos Aires—Brent and Pendergrast again fell out; and as a result, the French and British had practically no opposition to their program. A little later the matter was still further complicated, when the Argentine province of Corrientes, revolting against Rosas, was joined in alliance by the state of Paraguay. After a while the allied commanders reached the decision that they would convoy a fleet of

merchantmen up the Paraná, opening that river to Paraguay.¹³²

To the request made by the Brazilian Secretary, França, to Wise, our minister, for the joint action of the United States in putting an end to the difficulties on the La Plata River, Calhoun had replied that this should be left to the new Administration.¹³³ Wise continued to be interested, and when Polk and Buchanan decided to send a special agent to look into affairs in Paraguay, he was instructed to confer with Wise as to his work. The agent was E. A. Hopkins, a son of Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont. The friendly attitude of Paraguay had been brought to the attention of the United States in 1843, and Hopkins was instructed to report on the status of the country, with a view to recognition.¹³⁴ This young man, who seems to have had more courage than discretion, exceeded his instructions, assumed a "diplomatic character" which he did not have, committed the President to recognition, and offered the mediation of the United States between the Governments of Paraguay and Buenos Aires. Buchanan reproached him severely for this. The United States did not lack sympathy for Paraguay's struggles for independence, the Secretary noted, but it could not be overlooked that by joining with Corrientes against Rosas, that state had made itself the ally of Great Britain and France in their designs on the American continent. Paraguay, wrote Buchanan, by pursuing this course, had placed everything at hazard and had deprived the United States of the opportunity to interpose its good offices in the Argentine with any hope of success.¹³⁵

Meanwhile, Brent, evidently a very vigorous, if

somewhat prejudiced man, had undertaken to act as mediator, first, between Buenos Aires and Montevideo; secondly, between the allies and Buenos Aires; and, thirdly, between Buenos Aires and Paraguay. Brent's action led to a formal protest by Lord Aberdeen, through Pakenham, dated October 3, 1845, in which after complaining that Brent had acted without instructions and that the result of his work had been unfortunate, the British Secretary made a striking declaration as to the intentions of England and France. These countries, said Aberdeen, had no ulterior object in view. England had entered into joint intervention with France solely to stop the barbarous and desultory war which had continued three years with damage to commerce, and turned merely on the petty question whether one person, protected by General Rosas, or another, hated by him, should be placed at the head of the Montevidean Government. He specifically denied any intention to acquire territory.¹³⁶

Brent was recalled, although his offer of mediation was not publicly repudiated, and in his stead Polk sent W. A. Harris, of Virginia, who remained as chargé until 1851.¹³⁷ He was empowered to negotiate a treaty of commerce and navigation on the basis of reciprocity, and was told to inform the Argentine Government that while the United States would ultimately recognize the independence of Paraguay, they had delayed doing so because of Paraguay's practical co-operation with Great Britain and France.¹³⁸

Before long, first Great Britain and eventually France became weary of their efforts and ceased to press the Argentine Government. The significance of the episode

is that, in contrast with its vigorous opposition to British or European expansion or interference in Texas, in Oregon, in California, or even in Central America, Polk's Administration did not see fit to attempt to prevent European intervention in the affairs of these South American nations. As was suggested in an earlier chapter, the experience in the La Plata region quite sufficiently explains the limitation to North America of the "Polk Doctrine."

CHAPTER VIII

HENRY A. WISE AND THE SLAVE TRADE

WHEN we follow the story of Henry A. Wise's activities and proposals for the suppression of the illegal slave traffic from the coast of Africa to Brazil, we regret the more his lack of tact in dealing with the trivial episodes which aroused unnecessarily some ill feeling between Brazil and the United States, for that friction hurt the success of Wise's really important criticisms. Wise's station at Rio had brought him into contact with the details of slave-smuggling, much of which went on despite the British cruisers and the efforts for the suppression of the trade. His observations culminated in an important communication which he ventured to make directly to the British minister at Rio de Janeiro, Hamilton, on December 1, 1844, a document which gave rise to a considerable ventilation of the subject, for it drew a reply from the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, and it served in part as the basis for President Tyler's message of February 1845 on the subject, alluded to above. In this note Wise had asserted that British cruisers would not capture or destroy vessels that carried British goods for sale in Africa; and that they did not prevent the shipping of slaves in Africa, because the crew and officers received so many pounds per head for the capture of slaves and for sending them as apprentices to Demerara and other

British colonies. He urged that both Great Britain and America should cease to rely so much on their African squadrons, and instead should allow their ministers and consuls in Brazil to arrest culprits, summon witnesses, hold examinations, require bonds and send offenders home for trial, with witnesses; while the laws of both countries should be revised to control shippers, manufacturers and others at home, together with factors, agents and consignees abroad.

After waiting some months for investigation, the Earl of Aberdeen replied to Hamilton at Rio, December 4, 1845, setting forth arguments in rebuttal of Wise's allegations, and discussing principles. Aberdeen declared that in six years there had been 346 vessels brought before either the British Admiralty courts or the British Foreign courts, on charges of slave-traffic. Of these only sixty-six were found to have had slaves on board, while 280 had been seized without slaves. He pointed out that bounties for capture had been reckoned on the tonnage of the vessel rather than on the cargo, in order that the latter might make no difference in valuing the prize; that since the naval officers had no voice in the disposal of the slaves after capture, they had no conceivable interest in sending a ship to Demerara or any other British possession. Wise had charged, somewhat vaguely, said Aberdeen, that the British were trying to monopolize the African commerce. He set forth for Wise's consideration that some goods could be used in a legal trade as well as a slave trade, and it was beyond the complete control of the British or any free government to prevent a transfer from one use to another. Wise had alleged particularly that a British

subject by the name of Weetman was connected with the slave trade, and this, Aberdeen said, would be investigated. Concerning the larger matters of policy recommended by Wise to Hamilton, Aberdeen spoke cautiously, as some of these questions could be properly discussed only with the United States Government or its recognized organ. Wise's recommendations, Aberdeen reminded him, depended for their practical effect not so much on the good will of England or America as upon that of Brazil. He directed Wise's attention to the recent statutes 5 George IV, 113, and 6 and 7 Victoria, 98.

In conclusion, Aberdeen attacked the charge that Great Britain made apprentices of the Africans taken from the slave ships. Aberdeen said that, since the British Act prohibiting it, he had no reason to believe that a solitary instance had occurred of apprenticeship or of any forced labour of any liberated Africans for any term of years except occasionally in the case of very young children. It was not contrary to law, however, that a liberated African or any other person arriving in the West Indies should bind himself to a contract of service for twelve months. Sometimes these contracts had been executed in behalf of the ignorant Africans by officers who were instructed to make the best contracts in their power, but at the end of twelve months the Africans had been found capable of making their own terms.¹³⁹

The statements in regard to apprenticeship and bounties made by President Tyler in his message of February 20, 1845 had been brought before the House of Commons by a Mr. Aldam, and in reply to Aldam's questions Sir Robert Peel had undertaken to defend

the British practices and to show that the President had been misinformed.¹⁴⁰ Now, Aberdeen was engaged in the same task, but the indefatigable Wise, while treating with great respect Aberdeen's letter to Hamilton, was not abashed and undertook in another communication, dated July 31, 1846, to make a long reply to Aberdeen's letter, though, of course, this was directed to Hamilton.¹⁴¹ Thus Wise, before his unfortunate retirement, had succeeded in accomplishing what Calhoun had failed to do—he had precipitated a debate with the British Government over the slavery question, or at least over the slave trade.

Stirred by Wise's reports, the Government at Washington continued to press with vigour the cases of American vessels, such as the *Cyrus*, detained by British cruisers.¹⁴² But if we complained of this interference, we must fulfil our own obligations, and on September 2, 1847, Buchanan, writing to Crampton, the British minister, acknowledged the notes and papers received from Crampton and his predecessor on the subject of the slave trade, and said, in addition to the information which he had given Pakenham, July 31, 1845, that in accordance with the ninth article of the treaty of Washington, Wise had been instructed, September 27, 1845, to make the necessary representations to Brazil, and that he had obeyed this order in an interview with Senhor de Abreu, the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs, December 19, 1845. Similar instructions, said Buchanan, had been given to Tod, Wise's successor. These instructions were dated only a few days before, August 31, 1847, and reminded Tod of the participation of American vessels in the illegal slave trade. Our squadron, said Buchanan,

had been instructed to use the utmost vigilance in capturing all American vessels on the open sea and beyond the Brazilian jurisdiction, whether outward or inward bound, which were engaged in the African slave trade. This would almost necessarily produce dangerous and delicate questions between the two Governments, which, unless we were represented by a minister at Rio, might end in war. This made it all the more important for Tod to be properly received by that Court.¹⁴³

Besides these aspects of diplomacy concerning the slave trade in which the Government of the United States was directly concerned, we should not overlook two other phases in which our interest was indirect. The first was the new treaty made in 1845 between Great Britain and France for the suppression of the slave trade. In place of the right of search, which had been provided for in the unratified Quintuple Treaty, this adopted for France the American principle of joint cruising squadrons, and thus fulfilled Macaulay's indignant forecast of the influence of the United States. It was with reference to this treaty, also, that Guizot had felt constrained to deny the charge that England had been paid for abrogating the right of search by the promise of French support to British diplomacy in Texas, even to the extent of war with the United States; and it was at the time of this denial that Guizot had enunciated his theory of a balance of power in America.¹⁴⁴

There also followed a negotiation between England and Brazil concerning the slave trade. On March 12, 1845, the Government of Brazil notified Hamilton of its decision to annul the Convention of July 28, 1817, and thereby put an end to the right of visit and search which

had been granted to Great Britain by that treaty. Notice was given of the prospective termination of the British and Brazilian Courts of Mixed Commission established to judge slave cases at Rio and Sierra Leone. In letters of June 4 and July 2, Lord Aberdeen addressed Brazil in a tone very different from that which was used towards the United States. England had no recourse, said Aberdeen, but to give full effect to a later convention of 1826 under which the British Government had acquired the right to order the seizure of all Brazilian subjects on the high seas engaged in the slave trade; to punish them as pirates and to confiscate their goods. The Government would ask Parliament for legislation on the subject, to give the British Admiralty courts the proper jurisdiction.¹⁴⁵ The British Parliament promptly passed, August 8, 1845, an act which subjected Brazilian vessels engaged in the slave trade to trial before the High Court of Vice-Admiralty. Against this the Brazilian Government vigorously protested, and Lisboa, March 2, 1846, brought the matter to the attention of the Government of the United States. Buchanan made merely a formal acknowledgment.¹⁴⁶

CHAPTER IX

DIPLOMACY AND COMMERCE: GREAT BRITAIN, THE GERMAN STATES, THE PACIFIC AND THE ORIENT

I

THE success of the Oregon partition treaty gave to Louis McLane his long desired opportunity to resign his post at the Court of St. James's and return to the United States. He was succeeded there by George Bancroft, after Polk had in vain tendered the mission to Senator Dix of New York. Bancroft's sojourn in England forms one of the most interesting chapters of that famous historian's long life. He had the pleasure of witnessing the effect made on public opinion by the success of the armies of the United States in Mexico;¹⁴⁷ he transmitted perspicuous and instructive reports on the revolutions of 1848 in Europe, as well as observations on the contemporary state of affairs in England; he kept as close a watch as he could on the aggressive policy of Great Britain in Central America; and he reported the first phases of that famous dispute over the interpretation of the Oregon treaty of 1846, in regard to the maritime boundary between Vancouver Island and the United States, an issue which led to the arbitration of 1871, when Bancroft himself served as the agent of the United States. He was further interested in a convention to regulate emigration from Great Britain, and he

pressed with vigour efforts to secure clemency for Americans who had been implicated in the disorders in Ireland. As his greatest success he counted the negotiation of a satisfactory postal convention, following which he undertook to further a similar arrangement with France.¹⁴⁸

Bancroft, no less than Polk, had a sincere belief in the wisdom and benefit of breaking down tariff walls in Great Britain and in the United States. In one of his first dispatches he remarked: "Nothing can exceed the interest taken there [in Liverpool] in the change in the British and American tariffs." The proposal discussed above, to combine this with a settlement of the Oregon question, was dropped, and each country continued to proceed by legislative action; but the same result, the lowering of duties, was attained.

There remained another barrier in the intercourse of the two nations, that complicated and entangled accumulation of British laws which passed under the name of the Navigation Acts, and which, in 1845, had undergone the last of a series of codifications. Agitation for a more or less complete repeal of the discriminatory laws was now in progress in England, contemporary with and subsequent to the great struggle over the repeal of the Corn Laws. In 1847, after the passage of our new tariff, while British repeal of protective legislation was in progress, Buchanan instructed Bancroft to propose the conclusion of a new commercial treaty.¹⁴⁹ "Should Her Majesty's Government be so inclined," Bancroft notified Palmerston, "the Undersigned is prepared, on the part of the American Government to propose that British Ships may trade from any port in the world, to any Port in the United States, and be received, protected,

and in respect to charges and duties, treated like American ships, if, reciprocally, American ships may in like manner trade from any port of the world to any port under the dominion of Her Britannic Majesty."

Bancroft entered into an enthusiastic correspondence with Palmerston and with Labouchère as to this matter, and agreed to frame a convention *pari passu* with the progress of the bill in Parliament.¹⁵⁰ Before the British act finally passed, there came the change of Administration in the United States. Clayton, Secretary of State under President Taylor, instructed Bancroft to drop the project of a commercial treaty and censured him for his course. Bancroft replied that Clayton's instructions were regarded in England as "a very serious impediment to the passage of the bill" for repealing the Navigation Laws, and countered Clayton's lengthy criticism with an equally extended answer.¹⁵¹

But Parliament finally passed the act in June, and in his message of December 4, 1849, President Taylor said, perhaps not very willingly, that in consequence of the recent alterations of the British Navigation Acts there had come into existence reciprocal freedom of vessels of the two countries in each other's ports and that should no order-in-council disturb this legislative arrangement, the British act by which Great Britain was brought within the terms of the Act of Congress of 1817 would be productive of benefit, he hoped, to both countries.

II

One feels no little regret that the appointment of A. J. Donelson to the Prussian mission, though well de-

served, involved the recall of Henry Wheaton, the most experienced of our ministers abroad. The reciprocity treaty which Wheaton had negotiated with the German Zollverein had failed, but Wheaton had recently negotiated conventions with the Grand Duchy of Hesse and with Württemberg for abolishing certain old feudal charges (the *droit d'aubaine*, *droit de retraite*, and *droit de détraction*), which treaties were ratified in 1845. Similar treaties were successfully negotiated by Wheaton with Bavaria, with Saxony and with Nassau. The pressure for office nevertheless caused Polk, through Buchanan, to let Wheaton know that his resignation would be acceptable.¹⁵²

Though Wheaton was recalled, the efforts to obtain reciprocity treaties which he had so well advanced were continued. Through Donelson, and through Baron Gerolt, the Prussian minister at Washington, Secretary Buchanan proposed the extension of the principle of reciprocity to the whole Zollverein. In the latter part of March 1846, A. Dudley Mann, formerly consul at Bremen, was sent to Europe as bearer of dispatches to Berlin, and he was also vested with a special mission to the states of Hanover, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg.¹⁵³

An important treaty of commerce and navigation which Mann successfully negotiated with Hanover met with opposition in the Senate but was finally ratified. This treaty marked an advance over Wheaton's treaty of 1840 and, in Buchanan's words, constituted the commencement of a new era in our commercial policy.¹⁵⁴ The next year similar treaties were concluded with the governments of Oldenburg and Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

Mann was sent abroad again to visit the most important states of the Zollverein, such as Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, Brunswick, Hesse-Cassel and the free city of Frankfort on the Main, in order to promote another attempt to secure a commercial treaty with the Zollverein. Another important task was to secure accurate information in regard to emigration from Europe, an investigation which seems to have arisen from the fear on the part of the Government that under the cloak of emigration some of the states of Europe were exporting their criminals to the United States.¹⁵⁵ He made an extensive report on this subject.

In his annual message of December 5, 1848, Polk was able to inform Congress that during his Administration advantageous treaties of commerce had been concluded with New Granada, Peru, the Two Sicilies, Belgium, Hanover, Oldenburg and Mecklenburg-Schwerin. "Pursuing our example," he continued, "the restrictive system of Great Britain, our principal foreign customer, has been relaxed; a more liberal commercial policy has been adopted by other enlightened nations and our trade has been greatly enlarged and extended."¹⁵⁶ Correspondence over these new commercial arrangements constituted a part of Buchanan's labour in the Department of State that was neither small nor unfruitful.

III

As has been indicated above, the appointment of Alexander Hill Everett, of Massachusetts, as commissioner to China had been recommended by Calhoun.

The nomination was confirmed March 13, 1845. It was, therefore, from Buchanan that Everett received his instructions.

Alexander Hill Everett was the brother of our minister to Great Britain, but unlike the latter a Democrat. "Everett was," says Mr. Dennett, "perhaps, the ablest commissioner ever appointed, and the only experienced diplomat."¹⁵⁷ Now fifty-three years of age, he was most unfortunately in exceedingly bad health, and before his voyage to China was completed he was obliged to return to Boston, October 3, 1845, having on August 8 authorized Commodore Biddle to discharge temporarily the duties of commissioner. Everett brought back with him the ratified treaty of Wanghia. While Everett returned to Boston for medical treatment, Commodore Biddle proceeded to China, remaining until April 15, 1846, when he placed Peter Parker, of Massachusetts, as chargé until the return, October 5, 1846, of Everett. Everett died at his post June 28, 1847, thus having actually served but a little over eight months. Parker then resumed charge of the legation until a new commissioner, John W. Davis, of Indiana, arrived.

It is apparent, then, that the auspicious beginning made by Cushing was largely nullified, throughout the next years, by the broken course of our representation in China. In contrast with the wise policy of the British Government, the Chinese mission was further handicapped by the niggardliness of Congress, which fixed too small a salary to the offices of the commissioner and his secretary, and neglected to make adequate provision for our consuls.

In the instructions to Everett, Secretary Buchanan made reference to the problem of the execution of extra-territoriality. Congress had omitted to pass any law authorizing our consuls to try to punish an American citizen for murder or any other crime, although the treaty had reserved such jurisdiction from the authority of China. As such crimes could not remain altogether unpunished, for nothing would more exasperate the Chinese, the President directed that such accused persons should be sent home for trial, when it would remain for the courts of the United States to decide as to the jurisdiction.

Very little of importance was contained in the subsequent instructions to Everett. Buchanan urged on Congress the necessity of making legislative provision for the punishment of crimes committed in China, but it was not until August 1848 that Congress passed an act giving judicial powers to ministers and consuls of the United States in China and in Turkey.¹⁵⁸

When Everett's voyage was interrupted by illness, Commodore Biddle, acting in the commissioner's place, proceeded from China to Japan, with a full power, like that of Cushing, to make a treaty, but was refused positively any permission to negotiate for the opening of trade. An insult, insignificant in itself, which Biddle treated with magnanimity was distorted in the Japanese mind, and American prestige was perhaps lower than before. The Japanese sometimes mistreated shipwrecked American sailors, as was the case of those of the *Lagoda* released through the effort of Commander James Glynn in the *Preble* in 1849. But the days of Japanese isolation were numbered. Russia was pressing

from the northwest. The King of the Netherlands, in 1844, urged a change in Japanese policy, and Great Britain and France, as well as the United States, sent vessels to make visits. Through the Dutch trade at Deshima, news of what was happening in China and the outside world penetrated Japan. In this country, on the other hand, commercial interests began well defined propaganda for action by the Government.¹⁵⁹

To the Hawaiian Islands, Polk and Buchanan sent Anthony Ten Eyck. His predecessor, George Brown, had got into many difficulties with the Hawaiian Government. Ten Eyck was expected to restore friendly relations. He was given full power to negotiate a treaty with the Hawaiian Government like those between Hawaii and Great Britain and France. Buchanan stressed the interest of the United States in the continued independence of the Hawaiian Islands and the probable desire of Great Britain to annex them. Like Brown, Ten Eyck was soon in hot water. He complained bitterly of the wrongs of American citizens, but Buchanan frankly told him "the President at the present moment, with the Mexican war on hand, cannot think of asking Congress for authority to coerce the Government of the Sandwich Islands to redress the alleged grievances of our citizens." Ten Eyck complained of lack of instructions and neglect, as had Brown. On August 28, 1848, Buchanan sent Ten Eyck one of the longest instructions he ever wrote.¹⁶⁰ The Secretary expressed regret that the Hawaiian Government refused to make a treaty, discoursed on the limitations of official action in the case of claims, and on the jurisdiction of foreign countries over American citizens resident within their

limits. He blamed Ten Eyck for acting as counsel in a private case, and still more for endeavouring to persuade Commander DuPont of the U.S.S. *Cyane* to secure enforcement of his demands by violent measures.

With Turkey there was considerable correspondence concerning the desire of that power to improve and extend the cultivation of cotton in its dominions. In connection with four Negro men whom it was planned to take to Constantinople, Buchanan made the interesting point that the records of the Department showed it had been customary to give to free persons of colour born or resident within the United States, not a passport recognizing them as citizens but a certificate suitable to the nature of the case. To a slave, on the other hand, or to a person of colour whose character in this regard was doubtful, no document of this nature had been issued.¹⁶¹

The same act which extended the judicial powers of ministers and consuls of the United States in China applied also to the Turkish Empire.

It is curious to find that Russia, to which country Buchanan had himself gone as our representative, was the subject of little or no correspondence of importance. Our minister, Charles S. Tod, appointed in 1841, was recalled in 1846 and was succeeded by R. I. Ingersoll.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

IN reviewing the work of Buchanan, it must be remembered that here we are called upon to pass judgment only on his management, under Polk's control, of our foreign affairs as Secretary of State. It is doubtful whether the unfavourable criticism of his Presidency which has descended from Civil War times is a just one; but that is not under our present consideration. A good man of the best intentions, he was an able lawyer and a diligent public servant, and he had the courtesy which so much adorns the statesman. He had been well educated and had had the advantage in early life of a diplomatic mission abroad. He had devoted real study, as his speeches show, to our foreign relations. He was thus far better equipped than many of our Secretaries of State; and Polk, unfriendly critic though he was, paid tribute to the ability with which Buchanan drew up his diplomatic instructions. He kept on good terms with Pakenham. He handled with marked skill the difficult impasse in our negotiations with Brazil.

Unfortunately Buchanan's relations with the President frequently were not happy. They disagreed on points of policy, as well as on details of execution, and Polk too often ignored his Secretary. Perhaps the superior measure of prestige which Buchanan had formerly enjoyed made it difficult to adjust their contact perfectly. Before the Democratic nomination of

Polk as a "dark horse" candidate for the Presidency, Buchanan had been widely mentioned as a possible Democratic candidate, and Polk had contented himself with being an eager aspirant for the Vice-Presidency. A few weeks after Polk's nomination, in 1844, Buchanan wrote to a friend: "When you and I served with Mr. Polk in Congress, neither of us probably supposed that he would ever be President. He has since greatly improved. The last time he was in Washington, he dined and passed the afternoon with me, and the change forcibly impressed itself on me. Under all the circumstances, I believe no better selection could have been made."¹⁶² The sense of superiority which Buchanan thus revealed was probably not flattered by the manner in which Polk offered to the members of his Cabinet their respective offices. In a friendly, but somewhat magisterial, letter, Polk presented as a condition of appointment to a Cabinet office that any such officer who should become a candidate for the Presidency should retire from the Cabinet, and stressed also the undesirability of long absence from Washington on the part of Cabinet members. In his reply, Buchanan declined to say that he would not, under any circumstances, accept a nomination, but said that if he did so he would retire, unless invited to remain.¹⁶³

Very frequent differences of opinion are revealed in Polk's Diary. Indeed it was a sharp discussion with Buchanan over the Oregon question which apparently led Polk to undertake that journal which has become such a revelation to historical students. At first a "fifty-four-forty" man, Buchanan criticized Polk for holding to that position, and then, according to Polk, when the

treaty was made reverted for political reasons to the old position. Buchanan was very jealous as to the appointments to office in Pennsylvania, and resentment against what he considered disrespect on the President's part made him very bitter. A further cause of difference arose from Buchanan's anxious desire to be appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States. Ultimately Polk found his way to gratify Buchanan's wishes, but Buchanan after all declined the appointment. Buchanan did not give enthusiastic support to Polk's low-tariff plans; in fact, he considered the tariff of 1842 better than that of 1846. In several other cases than that of Oregon Polk noted surprising reversals of position on the part of Buchanan, and the President's explanation in most cases was that Buchanan was acting with reference to the election of 1848.¹⁶⁴

On one occasion the President wrathfully noted, following a "most unpleasant interview," that "Mr. Buchanan will find that I cannot be forced to act against my convictions, and that if he chooses to retire I will find no difficulty in administering the Government without his aid."¹⁶⁵ Buchanan nevertheless did not retire. Polk's judgments of men were not generous, and Buchanan left no diary. In his letters Buchanan generally avoided any improper reference to these differences of opinion. But he alludes to them in one instance. When the President and the Secretary disagreed, in February 1846, about further instructions to Slidell in regard to the Mexican mission, Buchanan addressed a note to Polk to justify his different view. "After a settled course of policy has been adopted," he wrote, "it ought not to be changed without good reason." He added in conclusion:

"When I differ from you it is always with reluctance and regret. I do not like to urge arguments in opposition before the whole Cabinet. I appear then to be occupying a position which is always painful to me. A little previous consultation with me on important questions of public policy relating to foreign affairs would always obviate this difficulty; because if I failed to convince you—there would then be no appearance of dissent."¹⁶⁶

Despite the lamentable lack of harmony between the President and the Secretary of State, the two worked together throughout the four years of Polk's Administration, and the combination of Polk's stronger will and Buchanan's finer mind produced notable results. Accomplishing successfully the acceptance of annexation by Texas, Polk and his Secretary vigorously took up a defence of the Texan boundaries and ultimately solved the difficult situation by a war which brought under the dominion of the United States California and New Mexico, with liberal compensation to an enemy whose default had long and patiently been tolerated and to whom very fair offers of settlement had first been made in vain. They brought the Oregon question to a definitive settlement, a fair compromise much more consonant with the earlier American offers than with those of Great Britain. In South America they pursued a less spectacular and less effective course, but the mistakes made by American agents there can scarcely be attributed to Buchanan. At least Buchanan elicited from Great Britain, in the La Plata River affair, a disclaimer of any intention to occupy territory. The expansionist program for the annexation of Cuba, not

wholly a sectional matter, broke down, as it did in later Administrations, notably in that of Buchanan himself. Threatened British aggression in Central America was vigilantly watched, and preliminary steps were taken, in the treaty with New Granada, to guard against it. Treaty obligations in regard to the suppression of the slave trade were executed in so far as was consistent with the heavy naval obligations entailed by a time of war. In the Orient and the Pacific the period was rather barren in its yield for American diplomacy—this was partly due to the misfortune of Everett's death. Buchanan negotiated commercial treaties with a long list of foreign countries, and, perhaps chief distinction of all, the United States moved toward the abolition of tariff barriers in step legislatively with its greatest commercial rival. With Denmark, the matter of the Bergen Prizes was apparently dropped, while that of the Danish Sound Dues, though pressed by our minister, Fleniken, on instructions from Buchanan, had to await the diplomacy of Marcy and Cass.¹⁶⁷ As to principles, the diplomacy of Polk and Buchanan was, in general, conservative. But in one point, at least, Buchanan developed a view which was contrary to precedent. This was in connection with the doctrine of expatriation, and the position that Buchanan now assumed was later maintained by him in his Presidency. Buchanan held—to quote the summary of Dr. John Bassett Moore—that “naturalization in the United States not only clothes the individual with a new allegiance but also absolves him from the obligations of the old.”¹⁶⁸ Several occasions arose for the expounding of this doctrine, notably the difficulties which overtook some American citizens

of Irish extraction who took part in the disorders in Ireland and came under the penal laws of Great Britain.

A word as to Buchanan's later years. When he retired from the Secretaryship of State, Buchanan was not quite fifty-eight years old. He died at Wheatland, his country place near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, June 1, 1868, nearly twenty years afterwards. He spent in private life the four years following his retirement as Secretary. In 1852 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency. In 1853 began his service as minister to Great Britain, which he concluded in 1856, returning to be elected President of the United States. After 1861, from the inauguration of Lincoln to the time of Buchanan's death he was again a private citizen, almost an obscure one.

As minister to Great Britain, he was subject, of course, to the instructions of Secretary Marcy, and the history of the important events of that mission belongs appropriately to the sketch of Marcy, which is to follow in this Series. In the period of his Presidency, the conduct of diplomatic matters was in the hands of Lewis Cass, and later of J. S. Black, but Buchanan found Cass without vigour for his task, and kept his own hand firmly upon the conduct of our foreign relations; and Black's term was very brief. This phase of Buchanan's diplomacy is properly discussed, in this Series, in the sketches of Cass and of Black in the following volume.

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